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The Nation.

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JAN 6 - 1986

EDITORIAL

# THE TEST THAT FAILED

If you think public schools should instill in their students the apple pie values of sharing, caring and democratic responsibility, consider the plans of the school board of the Henry P. Becton Regional High School in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Suspecting that some of the school's 516 students may be drinking alcohol or taking drugs, the board announced a policy of mass urinalysis. Students would be separated from their familiar surroundings of friends, teachers and parents and shut into rooms by white-coated strangers who would command them to expel fluids for analysis by unseen technicians using incomprehensible machinery. If that isn't an Orwellian nightmare, East Rutherford is Alphaville.

Fortunately for all, the bad dream was shattered by a sensitive and sensible state judge, who ruled in favor of five students who challenged the policy with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union. The board argued that drug testing was like testing for diabetes. But Judge Peter Ciolino said compulsory testing itself was clearly unconstitutional as an improper search and, moreover, it violated the students' right to privacy under the guise of a benign medical procedure.

No one gave evidence that Becton High had a particularly severe drug problem; only twenty-eight students entered a voluntary program for substance abuse last year. But in any case, the aim of the testing was to employ a new technique of social control. The process itself, not the test results, was the purpose of the policy, which acquainted students with totalitarian values, not democratic ones. Ever vigilant, the board is pressing its case "as far as the Supreme Court," its lawyer said. "We hoped [the judge] would have the moral fortitude to vote his conviction as a parent, but he took a very cautious and liberal interpretation of the Constitution."

UNESCO WALK
Michael Massing

CONTRA P.R.
Alexander Cockburn

EGYPT AFTER MALTA
Stanley Reed

INFO BUY-OUT
Herbert I. Schiller

'HABITS OF THE HEART'
Barbara Ehrenreich
Deborah Meier
Lynne Sharon Schwartz
Michael Zuckerman
James Walkup
Norman Birnbaum

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

# THE NEW U.S. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Twenty-five years after the doctrine of counterinsurgency transformed American military thinking and swept the nation into the Vietnam War, another strategy of intervention is winning Pentagon approval: the Reagan Administration's aggressive doctrine of low-intensity conflict, or L.I.C., as it is rapidly becoming known. L.I.C. is counterinsurgency and a whole lot more. As portrayed by Administration officials, it encompasses counterterrorist strikes, "police" operations of the Grenada type and U.S.-aided efforts to topple pro-Soviet regimes in the Third World. Unless vigorously opposed by Congress, a prospect that appears increasingly unlikely at this time, the doctrine will lead us into another round of Third World interventions just as surely as counterinsurgency led us into Vietnam.

Although not yet a household term, low-intensity conflict has already become a major preoccupation of Pentagon strategists. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee last winter, Gen. Wallace H. Nutting of the U.S. Readiness Command called it "the central strategic issue facing the United States today." A similar view was expressed by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in his annual report to Congress for fiscal 1986. Contending that "low-level conflict . . . will likely remain the most immediate threat to free world security for the rest of this century," Weinberger called for a major buildup of the nation's Special Operation Forces and other units formed specifically for L.I.C. actions.

Various Pentagon-funded think tanks have

(*Continued on Page 710*)

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# LETTERS.

## THE TUCHMAN LETTER

*London*

No wonder Barbara Tuchman is cross with *The Nation* for republishing our correspondence ["Beat the Devil," and "Letters," Nov. 23]. In it she appears in a distressingly unfavorable light. But there is no cause for regret. She tried to get her letter published by the *Times Literary Supplement* in London and did not object when I told her that I was abiding by her decision to make the correspondence public. Clearly she has no valid complaint.

In her letter to *The Nation* she has once again evaded the crucial point: that she with Saul Bellow and a number of others gave extravagant and unstinted praise to a book that has since been shown to be deeply flawed. In these circumstances, she and the other promoters of Joan Peters's *From Time Immemorial* should have the grace to admit their mistake and, if not express regret for having misled the American public, at least attempt to rebut the points that have been raised. This, Tuchman and the others have singularly refused to do. Instead, as the editorial reply to her letter pointed out, Tuchman merely tries to impugn the credentials of those who have caught her out.

Incidentally, does Tuchman seriously believe that the Middle Eastern question is so clear that anybody who regrets the Zionist dispossession of the Palestinians can be automatically dismissed?

While I am flattered by the attention Tuchman has paid to my past, her researches are little more accurate than those of Joan Peters in her book. Whatever the *Sunday Telegraph* may or may not have said in 1980, *The Spectator* under my editorship was largely pro-Israel. In those days I knew about as much about the subject as Tuchman appears to know now. Tuchman, perhaps, has the same source as Paul Berman, who managed to describe me in *The Village Voice* as "a right-wing Tory," though to his credit Berman has had the honesty to tell the truth about Peters's book.

Tuchman is right in saying that I was once joint chair of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding. Indeed, I helped found it. In 1967, with a few exceptions, only the Zionist side of the Arab-Israeli conflict was heard in this country. The position over here then was rather similar to what it appears to be today in the United States. People and papers that are determinedly liberal on most other issues cast off their liberalism when they come to Zionism, and prejudice and ignorance take over.

Why has *The New York Review of Books* failed to publish Professor Yehoshua Porath's review of *From Time Immemorial*? Why has *The Washington Post* not carried any correction of the farcical review it published?

But back to Tuchman. She finished her evasive letter to *The Nation* by saying that this was "a matter so important for public policy." I agree with her. But if it is so important, how does she justify her refusal to discuss it, let alone to make a graceful retraction and apology? *Sir Ian Gilmour*

## WHO'S PARTISAN? WHO'S RIGHT

*Pittsburgh*

To read Barbara Tuchman in response to criticisms of Joan Peters's *From Time Immemorial* ["Letters," Nov. 23] seemed an exciting prospect. From such a distinguished historian one expects a high-level critique that is as sophisticated as the arguments to which it is ostensibly addressed. . . . Instead, there was a less-than-subtle attempt to discredit Sir Ian Gilmour, Alexander Cockburn and Edward W. Said. Her charge was not based on the fact that the three are partisan. To be partisan on a political issue, including one with a historical dimension such as this one, is normal, as Tuchman knows, since no one is more partisan on it than she. The operative question is not who is partisan but who is right, whose arguments best satisfy the highest evidentiary standards. As a derogation, the charge of partisanship alone is feeble and ineffective. What Tuchman intended was to show that the critics are not merely partisan but that they are pro-Arab, even pro-Palestinian.

To rest her case on such a point is to reveal it as a pernicious smear and one that borders on racism, since the intended derogation is to be accomplished by associating her targets not with a corrupt institution or an evil cause but simply with a whole people. Her effort, therefore, is pathetic claptrap, and no less claptrap because it is such a familiar and cheap gambit to resort to this kind of generic calumny regarding those who argue from the Arab perspective. One has a right to expect more from someone of Tuchman's scholarly stature than a resort to intellectual spitballs.

*Robert G. Hazo*
*American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee*

## DEPLORABLE APPLAUSE

*Brooklyn*

How Milton Viorst can say that Egyptian applause for the four Achille Lauro hijackers does not mean that the Egyptians are uncivilized distorts the circumstances beyond recognition ["Is Peace a Victim?" Oct. 26]. Deplorable as the bombing of the P.L.O. headquarters near Tunis and the imperialism of Israel are, they are no justification for the brutal, coldblooded murder of an aged, incapacitated man. His only crime was to be an American tourist.

Viorst does not even mention President Hosni Mubarak's lying and obvious intention to protect the hijackers.

The P.L.O. is entitled to a forum, but *The Nation*, as I have known it, is an unlikely place. Or is it? *Kenneth J. Rawson*

## PIRATES PURSUED

*San Antonio*

Under different circumstances I might have understood Aryeh Neier's application of the "venerable principle of international law" that a pirate is the enemy of all alike and that "there is universal jurisdiction to apprehend him and to judge him" ["Rules of Law," Oct. 26].

I might have understood it if the United States had apprehended the four Palestinians when they were on the Achille Lauro, instead of forcing down the Egyptian airliner when the four were already in custody. I especially don't understand it in a world of 1 billion Moslems who increasingly hate our country.

Aryeh Neier is a good fellow, but has he been out to lunch lately?

*Maury Maverick Jr.*

P.S. Throw a little raw meat to Alexander Cockburn.

## HIJACKERS HIJACKED

*Mount Vernon, Ohio*

Aryeh Neier apparently believes that the hijacking of planes is proper if the purpose is just and right. He would receive no argument on that point from any terrorist.

I wonder what Neier's reaction would be if this nation were deporting an alleged or confessed Nazi war criminal to East Germany via TWA and en route that plane was forced to land in Tel Aviv by four Israeli fighters.

*George L. Breithaupt*

## NEIER REPLIES

*New York City*

Maury Maverick Jr. says the four hijackers were "in custody." Who is he kidding?

George Breithaupt calls the interception of the plane carrying the four pirates a hijacking. By that logic, if a criminal commits a robbery and then jumps into a cab to make his escape, intercepting that cab would also be a hijacking. *Aryeh Neier*

*The Nation* welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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# EDITORIALS.

## Big Is Not Better

"Merger Mania" is one of those recurring headlines summoned by editors from their corporate unconscious every so often to exorcise their doubts about the efficiency and benevolence of the American economy. In recent years the doubts have been mounting and the summonses served with increasing frequency. There have been more than 3,000 corporate mergers and acquisitions this year, almost twice as many as there were in 1980. And their dollar value is growing, too: this year's batch is expected to top last year's record $125 billion. But as much as editorialists, small-business enthusiasts and a few liberal economists may decry the trend, there is not much political passion in the country for antitrust regulation or fiscal sanctions against mergers. As a former Federal Trade Commission administrator said, "This is what happens when the free-market theory of the Chicago School meets the policy of greed of the Reagan Administration."

In an important way, Reagan has fueled the headlong rush to corporate concentration. This month's merger of General Electric and RCA is a perfect case in point. More or less at RCA's invitation (to avoid a hostile takeover by less generous raiders), G.E. plunked down $6.28 billion in cash to buy the entertainment and electronics giant, the ninth-largest industrial corporation on the Fortune 500. And where did G.E. get all that green? Well, partly from us taxpayers, in the form of breaks written into Reagan's tax reduction program passed with bipartisan support in 1981. In the 1970s, G.E. was paying taxes at the going rate for

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corporations of about 35 percent. But from 1981 through 1983 it payed no taxes at all and actually got a $283 million refund. In 1984, G.E. payed a piddling $185 million in taxes, thank you very much. But over those four years it reported profits of $9.5 billion. In other words, its four-year tax rate was just a hair more than 1 percent, not counting its 3 percent rebate.

The rationale for this extravagant corporate welfare program was that it would encourage investment in industrial "plant" and lead to productive expansion, the so-called reindustrialization of the American economy so fervently desired by economists of all ideological camps. But that's not what happened. Big corporations, like G.E., have used their tax windfalls to buy other big corporations, like RCA, with no attendant benefits for consumers, workers or the industrial infrastructure. In fact, there are likely to be more social deficits than profits from the mergers. The history of takeovers in the past two decades shows that many of the bloated businesses grow weaker with size. Hungry executives loot the rich sectors of their empire and neglect the poor ones. Corporate bureaucrats spend so much time playing Monopoly that they tend to forget the products they make, the services they perform and the needs they are supposed to fulfill. The motive force of their efforts is the imperial imperative, the urge to get bigger, and they accomplish that not by getting better but by buying one another out.

So who benefits? Forget about the hundreds of thousands of workers in G.E. and RCA plants and offices. They were neither consulted nor even considered when the two men at the top of their corporate pyramids huddled secretly for six days and emerged with the deal all signed and sealed. Now the workers and their communities are vulnerable to all the acts of mischief traditionally perpetrated by monopolies on vassals in their domain: summary plant closings, sudden divestitures, capital flights, unionbusting. Forget about the consumers, who now have less leverage to affect decisions about quality, price and choice in a constricted marketplace. Forget about Federal purchasing policy, which will be determined by the demands of monopolies rather than the needs of government agencies. In the huge military sector alone G.E./RCA will be so big that, as with General Dynamics, no one will dare deny it a contract—or cancel one because of poor performance or malfeasance.

The only winners are the men at the top, with their golden parachutes, bonuses, stock options and other expensive trinkets built into the merger game. The lawyers and brokers who arrange the deals do well, too, as do stock speculators who play along on the Big Board. The raging bull market of the last year is in some part fed by merger mania.

When pressed, the corporate managers will say that concentration will help American industry to compete in the global marketplace, but they never say how. Compete against whom? The Russians are in a different league, and the Europeans do not play as one team against the world, so that leaves the Japanese. But Japan's economy is miles more competitive than America's is becoming, and doing very well because of the competition. There are eleven major Japanese automobile manufacturers, for instance, for an internal market less than half the size of America's. No matter what they say, the lords of merger are not interested in competition of any kind, foreign or domestic, but in control and in the profits that accrue from domination.

### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

In accordance with our usual practice at this time of year, we will skip an issue. Our normal weekly schedule resumes with the January 11 issue, which will feature an article by Gore Vidal on the Four Horsemen of American Empire, the decline of the West, the rise of the East, Soviet-U.S. convergence and related matters. The essay is adapted from Vidal's controversial speech at a recent PEN club author's evening in New York City. Although the occasion was well covered in the local press, the substance of Vidal's remarks was not. Oh, yes: Calvin Trillin's column will appear belatedly in the same number. Seasonal cheer to all our readers, writers and artists.

# Bush-wacked

At a time when leading Democrats crumple before the mere image of Ronald Reagan and look only rightward for new policies, it is a small relief to find even more cravenness among the Republicans. Surely, Vice President Bush set a record for weak knees the other night at a dinner party in Washington when he praised the late, contemptible William Loeb, the New Hampshire newspaper publisher, as "a fighter for those very things that bring all of us here tonight."

Now, it's painfully clear what brought Bush there that night in the role of lickspittle: ambition for 1988. So he was ready to try to exorcise the specter of wimpdom and "moderation" haunting his candidacy—anything to improve his chances in the New Hampshire primary election. The risk was that he wouldn't fool the ravenous right-wingers with this conversion but simply strengthen their view that he's a gutless wonder not to be counted on in their radical crusade.

After all, his audience knew that Loeb, the eccentric, reactionary mudslinger, had called Bush "unfit" for the nomination in 1980 and a "spoiled little rich kid." Of course, that was also the year when Bush, not yet enlightened, attacked Reagan for his "voodoo economics."

A few at that dinner honoring perhaps the worst newspaper publisher of his generation might have recalled that Loeb also labeled Eisenhower a "stinking hypocrite" and Gerald Ford "Jerry the Jerk," and once headlined an article "Kissinger the Kike." He saw Kissinger then as "a tool of the Communist conspiracy," which gives some flavor of the man Bush was praising.

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It is getting harder for the spellbound Democrats to accommodate themselves to the peculiarities of Reagan II, as their restless thrashing about in the deficit reduction and tax reform debates have shown. They still have no coherent policies for the future, nor the courage to stick to the New Deal tradition. But as the scramble for succession begins, the cracks are appearing in the Republican icons. A few more grisly comedies like the genuflection of George Bush might actually give the Democrats the nerve to stand for something decent.

# The Unesco Walk

A year after giving notice of its intent to withdraw from Unesco, Britain has gone ahead and done the dirty deed. Its decision, announced earlier this month, delivers another serious blow to an embattled institution. On a symbolic level, Britain's withdrawal removes a founding member of Unesco, one whose intellectuals played a key role in getting the organization started in the dark aftermath of World War II. More immediately, Britain's decision magnifies the impact of the U.S. withdrawal a year earlier. Now that Britain has exited, it is argued that the American move can no longer be dismissed as an isolated fit of pique.

Such an analysis, however, is not completely accurate. It was not so much Britain that decided to withdraw from Unesco as it was Margaret Thatcher. Even for someone known for marching to a different drummer, Thatcher was remarkably isolated on this issue. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons, a bipartisan body, unanimously recommended that Britain remain in the organization. During a five-hour debate in Commons, virtually every participant, Conservative and Labor, condemned the government's decision. Thatcher's own Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Howe, publicly argued that Britain should stay in Unesco and fight for reform.

Opinion from abroad was equally lopsided. France urged Britain to stay, and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl personally appealed to Thatcher to reconsider. In fact, the entire European Economic Community advised against a British withdrawal. So did every member of the Commonwealth.

Such appeals reflected broad agreement that Unesco's most recent general conference, held last month in Sofia, Bulgaria, had accepted many of the reforms sought by Britain and other Western nations. London's chief complaints had been the familiar ones: Unesco was profligate, its bureaucracy top-heavy, its programs excessively "politicized." As Britain desired, the general conference voted to absorb the 25 percent drop in funds caused by the U.S. pullout rather than require offsetting contributions from other members. It also rejected some controversial resolutions on communications issues and voted to renew the focus on Unesco's original aims—education, science and culture—while retreating from politically contentious fields, like disarmament. A confidential U.S. report on the proceedings obtained by the London *Guardian* said British delegates were "guardedly satisfied" with the results of the conference.

Nonetheless, Margaret Thatcher decided to withdraw. Critics had few doubts as to the reason why. British newspapers reported that Secretary of State George Shultz and Jean Gerard, the former U.S. delegate to Unesco, made their views known to British officials before the final decision was made. During the debate in Commons, members of both parties criticized the Thatcher government for abjectly capitulating to pressure from the Reagan Administration.

One Member of Parliament was especially biting in describing Washington's stance: "Those of us who know the United States intimately. . . know that it is passing through a time of intense and distasteful nationalism. It believes that it walks high and that the rest of the world has to do what it demands. It will get through that in time. It is an unpleasant reaction to the defeat in Vietnam."

That assessment came not from Neil Kinnock or Tony Benn or any other Labor leader, but from Edward Heath, the former Tory Prime Minister. His remarks indicate just how unilateral was Margaret Thatcher's decision to leave Unesco.

MICHAEL MASSING

*Michael Massing is a New York City-based writer who frequently covers foreign affairs.*

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

To our readers:

Starting in January a new company will be publishing *The Nation*. Victor and I, together with Arthur Carter, a businessman who is also the founder and publisher of *The Litchfield County Times*, a northwestern Connecticut weekly, have formed a partnership that will replace Nation Enterprises, the financial entity which since 1978 has sustained *The Nation* while enabling it to increase circulation to the current level of 67,000.

Our goal is to maintain the impressive growth rate of recent years with renewed energy and purpose. I will remain as publisher, Victor will continue as editor and the day-to-day business of getting out the magazine will be handled by our present staff. We want to thank our remarkable group of former partners for making the past eight years possible, and we welcome Arthur Carter to the world of opinion journalism.

As the latest custodians of *The Nation*'s heritage, we believe that the new arrangement, combined with the Nation Associates and our other sources of support, will strengthen the magazine's economic circumstances and further its ability to influence the political culture.

On behalf of all of us who work at *The Nation*, we send our very best wishes for the new year.

Hamilton Fish 3rd

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# BEAT THE DEVIL.

## Nicaragua: News From Nowhere

At the very moment that the Reagan Administration is hotting up its campaign to win from Congress direct military funding for its beleaguered *contra* forces, much of the U.S. press appears to have abandoned all efforts to contradict or even to challenge the propaganda put forth by the White House, the *contras* and their U.S. allies. The stakes are very high. The only *contra* success, as an A.P. story moving December 19 detailed, has been cocaine smuggling into the United States, with the knowledge of Federal officials. In Nicaragua they've gone nowhere. The only option left for Reagan is direct U.S. intervention, to which military funding for the *contras* would be the preliminary. Hence the new propaganda offensive.

Over the last two weeks, for example, the press has been faithfully relaying the claims of Elliott Abrams, citing *contra* leaders and "intelligence sources," that there is a mounting Cuban military presence in Nicaragua. *New York Times* reporter Shirley Christian, heading for a new assignment in the Southern Cone, has long acted as a press agent for the *contras*. But just as shameless as Christian's antics was the *Times* Op-Ed page for December 13, which contained a grotesque public relations handout from the *contras*, signed by Arturo Cruz, Adolfo Calero and Alfonso Robelo. They announced their passionate commitment to human rights, which "applies even while we are fighting against those who . . . violate the rights of . . . innocent Nicaraguans."

This in the name of the "United Nicaraguan Opposition," i.e., the F.D.N., whose sole strategy, terror against civilians, has been established by hundreds of witnesses in unimpeached reports. Would *The New York Times* in 1942 have printed an Op-Ed piece by Heinrich Himmler, affirming his respect for human rights even as his Einsatzgruppen were murdering Bolsheviks, Jews and other unfortunates in the path of the German march eastward?

If anyone thinks the analogy farfetched, he should remember that the C.I.A.'s "Psychological Operations" manual used by the *contras* cited Hitler's army as a successful exponent of psychological warfare and urged the *contra* commanders to remember that "this type of operation is similar to the Fifth Column, which was used in the first part of the Second World War, and which through infiltration and subversion tactics allowed the Germans to penetrate the target countries before the invasions."

Thus it was that on August 2 an F.D.N. group assembled twelve Sandinista supporters before the villagers of Cuapa and then tortured, murdered and mutilated eleven of them, including the village librarian. Cruz's freedom fighters, who boasted of the Cuapa episode as a military victory until reporters began to ask questions, were obeying to the letter the sentences in the manual instructing: "It is possible to neutralize carefully selected and planned targets. . . . it is absolutely necessary to gather together the population affected, so that they will be present, take part in the act, and formulate accusations against the oppressor."

On its side the Reagan Administration has not only *The New York Times*, printing *contra* handouts, but also "liberals," who accept Reagan's framing of the issue. A good example is the columnist Richard Cohen, who wrote, without irony, in *The Washington Post* on December 11: "It is necessary when writing about Nicaragua to follow certain rules and I will do so. First you must condemn the Sandinista regime, point out that it is anti-democratic, abuses civil liberties, censors the press, is avowedly Marxist, has close ties to both Moscow and Havana, is increasingly corrupt and has betrayed its own revolution. And then you have to say that the United States could never tolerate Soviet MIGs or missiles of any kind in Nicaragua."

### The Case of Robert Leiken

A particularly significant tactician in engineering the "liberal surrender" is Robert Leiken, now a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment. On October 8, 1984, Leiken published his notorious article "Nicaragua's Untold Stories" in *The New Republic*. Its calumnies and falsehoods formed an adroit piece of anti-Sandinista propaganda, effective with members of Congress, already eager to dump Nicaragua, and popular with the State Department, which distributed it to embassies around the world.

Now Leiken has recycled many of the propositions advanced in *The New Republic* in an article, the first of three, in the December 5 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, thus recruiting that publication to the Reagan alliance. One of Leiken's principal purposes is to invent Arturo Cruz as an authentic hero of the Nicaraguan opposition. To this end, he proposes that when Cruz visited Nicaragua in the summer of 1984, popular demonstrations for him were so overwhelming that the Sandinistas not only broke up his rallies with imported *turbas* ("mobs") but resolved to give Cruz no chance to prove his support at the ballot box. To buttress this fantasy, Leiken returns obsessively both in *The New Republic* and *The New York Review* to a rally that took place at Chinandega on August 5 and that, he claims, formed the climax of Cruz's tour. Here, Leiken says, in a town historically sympathetic to the Sandinistas, despite the efforts of the *turbas*, Cruz's popularity was overwhelming.

A few weeks after the *New Republic* article appeared, Tony Jenkins, correspondent in Managua for the London *Guardian* and the BBC, sent the magazine a letter, most of which I reproduce here:

> I have just read the political cartoon "Nicaragua's Untold Stories" by Robert Leiken. . . . What fun! It was so in character; when Bob was last in Managua he boasted to me of how he was being complimented in Washington for his remarkable political record. Certainly the swing from Pol Pot Maoist to darling of the New Right must have been an entertaining spectacle. . . .
>
> But the funniest part of the Leiken tale was the description of events at Arturo Cruz's Chinandega rally, which we are solemnly informed was "perhaps the most illuminating political event in the five years of Sandinista rule." . . . I went to the rally. I hate to say it, but events simply did not transpire as Bob describes them. Allow me to enumerate:

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(1) Chinandega has never been "historically the heart of Sandinista organizing efforts and support," except in Bob's fevered imagination. That description would go first to Masaya, or Esteli, or Leon, or Matagalpa. . . .

(3) . . . "fifty *turbas*" did not "burst into the soccer field, tearing down the banners and dispersing the organizers." Eight youths did appear and warned the people to go away, threatening to return in half an hour. . . .

(4) On the day of the rally "local authorities" did not "impede traffic from outlying areas into Chinandega." This rumour was circulating while demonstrators were gathering, so I went to check it out: the main road into the town was open; not a soldier, policeman or *turba* in sight.

(5) Cruz did not "march through the city" of Chinandega—ever.

(6) NBC did not "tape the entire demonstration." The rally was filmed by the Visnews crew, who subsequently passed a copy of the tape to NBC. I share a house with the Visnews crew in Managua. We have a copy of the tape in our house. Bob, or anyone else, is welcome to come and look at the tape on the editing equipment which can freeze-frame. It would be a brave mathematician who could count 7,000 people at the rally. [Jenkins says that, at the most generous estimate, there were 4,000 people there.]

(7) "When Cruz began to speak, dozens of *turbas* armed with sticks, stones and machetes" did not "surround the field." The Sandinista supporters waiting a quarter of a mile down the road after the rally did not "come in on what appeared to be army trucks." No army truck was to be seen. . . .

(8) The police did exactly the opposite of what Bob describes; they tried to keep the two sides apart, as the Visnews tape clearly shows. The police were the first people to be hit by the stones which started to fly, simultaneously, from both sides. . . . equal numbers of both clashed with sticks and stones; again the tape proves this. The *turbas* were not "routed" by larger numbers of Cruz demonstrators. It was the latter who were routed in an incident which, while unpleasant, was no worse that the sort of scenes which regularly take place during elections in France or Italy. . . .

## Faking a 'Fake Election'

*The New Republic* did not print this letter. Nor do *The New York Review*'s editors appear to have been disturbed by Leiken's assemblage of hearsay, unnamed sources and unattributed quotations, even though the article, requested as a report on the elections, took about a year to contrive.

Leiken has to conceal in *The New York Review* the fact that Cruz and the Coordinadora had already refused to participate in the elections by the time of the Chinandega rally. He also has to assert that the elections were fixed, despite the conclusions of several groups of international observers that they were fair. He achieves this by innuendo, by misrepresentation and by lies.

*Innuendo*: One of the groups observing the elections was the Latin American Studies Association, which concluded in its report of November 19 that the elections had been fairly conducted. Leiken scorns the report, with the sole charge that LASA's observing group was "opposed to Reagan and generally sympathetic to the Sandinistas." If innuendo is to be the mode, one could more accurately say that Leiken's Maoist background, and hence antipathy to the Sandinistas, is revealed when he begins his article by formulating the conflict as one between the United States and the Soviet Union, a view offering by implication the Maoist thesis that Nicaragua is merely a pawn of the hegemonist Soviet Union rather than a country under attack by the United States. One could also point out, as *The New York Review* did not, that Leiken is a close political supporter of Arturo Cruz.

*Misrepresentation*. Leiken cites both LASA and the British Liberal Lord Chitnis as endorsing "'the validity of the electoral process.' . . . This was not the impression of the Dutch official observers." There were two observers from the Netherlands, Dr. Thom Kerstiens and Dr. Piet Nelissen, attending on behalf of the Dutch government. In their "Report on the Elections in Nicaragua" they offer the opinion that the elections should have been postponed but note in their formal "conclusions" the agreement of observers, including themselves, on "the orderly course of events," "the absence of voting irregularities," "the absence of irregularities in the processing of election results," all facts questioned by Leiken, with the implication that the Dutch report supports his views.

*Lies*. One example: Leiken says that on election day, he visited eleven voting places in Nicaragua and "the turnout averaged 40 percent." He is thus asserting that he personally established turnout figures below the totals finally presented by the Nicaraguan Electoral Council. Reggie Norton of the Washington Office on Latin America visited the same area as Leiken and says Leiken's version is "untrue."

Any visitor on that day could see at each polling place the list of registered voters and discover from polling officials as the day progressed how many had voted. When Norton visited in midmorning the turnout ranged between 40 percent and 50 percent. In the afternoon, two hours before the polls closed, Norton revisited and found the turnout had gone to somewhere between 60 percent and 80 percent. When the final figures were in, turnout fell below 50 percent only at some polling places on the Atlantic coast, which neither Leiken nor Norton visited. So when did Leiken visit the polling places he mentioned? If it was in the morning, why did he leave the impression that these were final totals? And if at the close of polling, why does he distort the turnout?

It would take a proper pamphlet to deal with the rest of Leiken's libels and distortions. However tedious, the task would be worthwhile, for it would disclose how lies have taken hold, how stock propaganda from the *contras* or from the C.I.A. or from other Reagan officials has become received "history," trickling down the columns of *The New York Review* and out of the mouths of Congressmen as they hasten to vote more aid to the *contras*. Sometimes I sense despair on the part of Nicaragua's true friends here at the avalanche of disinformation that has to be contested every day. But the effort of refutation must be made if we are not, willy-nilly, to become part of that Fifth Column the Psychological Manual spoke about so nostalgically.

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# CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

## ■ World Bank Follies

It is fashionable in Washington to say the Third World is suffering from a shortage of capital. Only through the infusion of new, multibillion-dollar loans, the popular refrain goes, will countries like Brazil be able to resume economic growth, repay their U.S. bankers and eventually transform their poor into a middle class.

In this city an idea always has an identifying code word or phrase. This one's known as the "Baker plan," after Secretary of the Treasury James A. Baker, who unveiled it in Seoul last October at the annual World Bank–International Monetary Fund meeting. The three-pronged strategy calls for already overexposed commercial bankers to make $20 billion in loans to the Third World over the next three years. Debt-ridden countries will be pressured to make unspecified "reforms," by which is traditionally meant the removal of barriers to private investment. Meanwhile, multilateral lending institutions, including the I.M.F. and the World Bank, will increase their loans by at least $9 billion.

Yet the main problem is not a shortage of capital; it is the kind of economic development being fostered by and for Third World elites. This is a familiar criticism. Usually, though, the critics are not found on the World Bank's own executive board of directors.

Last year, Héctor Echeverri, a Colombian who had served as an alternate executive director for almost two years, stunned his colleagues on the board with his farewell remarks. Instead of the usual homily, Echeverri delivered a polite but scathing criticism of the bank's estrangement from the poor it purports to help, its lack of attention to anything other than the balance sheet and its assent to manipulation by the United States.

To underscore his point, Echeverri, who represented Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Ecuador and the Philippines during his tenure, recounted a visit by a World Bank mission to a Colombian agricultural project. The visiting bankers, Echeverri recalled, "all wore dark glasses and carried umbrellas, canteens of purified water slung from their belts, and attaché cases with combination locks. Some of them had American Express shoulder bags containing Kleenex, torch, razor, comb and mosquito repellent."

The morning tour of the grounds was memorable chiefly because the Colombian Minister of Agriculture was unable to distinguish between wheat and rice. After a splendid lunch, washed down with beer, Coca-Cola and crayfish cocktails, the bank mission's leader called off the rest of the tour, telling his hosts: "We really should get back to Bogotá. We have to continue our talks . . . and we need to exchange our money in the black market."

Echeverri did not confine himself to ridiculing that particular mission. He told his colleagues on the board:

> [The bank's] only concern seems to be that governments should meet their financial obligations on schedule; it does not keep full statistics on the success or failure of each individual project. . . .
>
> Now we can see bridges without rivers all over the developing countries; schools without teachers; hospitals with no doctors or equipment; dry hydroelectric plants; railroads without tracks; oil pipelines without any oil to pump. . . .
>
> The rate of return given for all projects is always between good and excellent, in a range between 10 and 50 percent. . . . [These are] based on regressions contained in some very sophisticated mathematical equations, which have nothing to do with what is happening in reality.

Echeverri ended his remarks by distributing copies of a cable that David Mulford, U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, sent in October 1984 to the industrialized countries that control the World Bank—Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and Canada. In it Mulford asked each country to vote against a pending World Bank loan for Colombian petroleum development because the loan would bolster the state-owned oil company at the expense of private capital.

Thus, in the view of Reagan's Treasury Department, development isn't development unless it is done by and for the entrepreneur. The Baker plan merely recognizes that the private banks aren't going to invest further in the Third World unless they receive a bailout. After the usual haggling, Baker will eventually get his way: the $29 billion will rescue the banks; the debtor nations will take out more commercial bank loans for the same kind of projects funded in the past. Baker will therefore succeed in stabilizing world financial markets for a time. But how does any of this help the poorest of the poor?

## ■ Fooling With FBIS

Director of Central Intelligence William Casey's secret briefings before Congress have been criticized for their excessive ideological bias, and he has suppressed C.I.A. analyses that do not support the Administration line. Recently, the politicization of intelligence was extended to what had been a routine operation. For decades the C.I.A. has financed translations of foreign newspapers, periodicals, books and broadcasts from around the world, known as Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) reports.

Several weeks ago, members of Congress who subscribe to the Latin American FBIS (pronounced "fibis") were surprised to receive a report titled "Special Translation." It was indistinguishable from the regular format, except that it contained only censored articles from *La Prensa*. As the preface explained, "These selected articles are from Managua *La Prensa* as prepared for publication but deleted by government censors and subsequently passed to the U.S. Embassy."

FBIS readers didn't complain about receiving the extra issue, but they did have some questions. When is Casey's agency going to provide translations of what the magazine *ABC Color* would publish in Paraguay if Gen. Alfredo Stroessner didn't censor it? The next time Gen. Augusto Pinochet closes down a dozen Chilean newspapers will FBIS readers get to see the news not fit to print in Santiago? And when can they expect to see the stories the Haitian editors of *L'Information* dare not print for fear of Baby Doc?

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# ARTICLES.

EGYPT AFTER MALTA

# Mubarak Walks a Shaky Tightrope

STANLEY REED

In the storm of recriminations in Egypt that followed the Achille Lauro fiasco, the provocative leftist weekly *Al Ahaly* asked a pertinent question: "Will the crime of hijacking the Egyptian plane be the calamity that puts us back on the right track, which we have forsaken for the last 15 years?" By that the paper meant, Will Egypt at last acknowledge the folly of maintaining close ties with the United States and take a more independent approach to resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute and reviving the economy? A break with the United States by the most powerful Arab state—the only one to have signed a peace treaty with Israel—would have almost as profound an impact on the region as the Iranian revolution had.

Officially the Egyptians say no change is in the offing. President Hosni Mubarak is trying to undo whatever damage his hot words about "piracy" might have caused him in Washington following the U.S. interception of the Egyptian airliner carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers. By granting U.S. "antiterrorist" specialists the privilege of playing an advisory role in the ill-fated storming of the hijacked Egyptair jet in Malta, he gratified his American patrons. (Maltese officials prevented the United States from direct participation.) Now he is allowing the joint U.S.-Egyptian military exercises planned for this month to go ahead, although the Arab press had reported that he intended to cancel them. He is also resuming talks with the Israelis on border disputes, which he had suspended to protest the October 1 bombing of Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters near Tunis.

No one should be fooled by Mubarak's attempts to pretend that all is well between Cairo and Washington and that even Egyptian-Israeli relations are not so bad. The displays of anti-American and anti-Israeli feeling in Egypt in the past two months have been more than isolated outbursts of emotion. The "normal" and "neighborly" relations with Israel prescribed in the 1979 peace treaty negotiated at Camp David have not materialized. As the Egyptian economy deteriorates and the peace process remains stalled, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Mubarak to justify the close relationship with the United States that was supposed to produce wondrous improvement on both fronts. To give just one example, in last year's parliamentary election the three main opposition parties took positions highly critical of the Camp David accords, and Mubarak's own National Democratic Party thought it the better part of valor to minimize the nation's ties with the United States and Israel. Its 8,000-word platform mentioned neither Camp David nor Anwar el-Sadat, the party's founder.

Many close observers of U.S.-Egyptian relations say that a confrontation like the one that occurred over how to dispose of the Achille Lauro hijackers was inevitable. Mohammed Hakki, a Washington-based consultant who served as press counselor at the Egyptian Embassy from 1975 to 1981 and as head of the State Information Service from 1981 to 1982, was in Cairo shortly after the incident and was able to compare the reactions of officials and journalists in both capitals. "It was like being on two completely different planets," he said. "There is a complete lack of proper communication between the two countries."

Poor communication was certainly a factor in the debacle. Political counselor Osama al-Baz, who is normally the best channel to Mubarak, was in Tunis at the time, so Cairo relied on Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Megid, who proved an unsatisfactory conduit. The embassy does not have the easy access to this Egyptian president that it had to Sadat. That estrangement may be attributable in part to the abrasive personality of Ambassador Nicholas A. Veliotes, whose call for Egypt to "prosecute those sons of bitches" (overheard in a ship-to-shore telephone conversation with an aide) made him a hero in America but touched off demands for his recall in Cairo. Mubarak and his aides had recognized that Egypt was a low-priority concern in Washington after Jimmy Carter's defeat in 1980, but they had not anticipated that the Reagan Administration would consider the offended dignity of a friendly Arab country a small price to pay for the opportunity to bring terrorists to justice. In an interview with a local magazine, al-Baz termed the interception of the Egyptian plane by U.S. Navy jets "unimaginable on the part of any country, let alone one that we consider a friendly state with a principal role in the peace process." He should have known better.

Al-Baz, a graduate of Harvard Law School, has been Mubarak's political mentor since the late 1970s, and is the architect of a strategy that is likely to lead to further tension with Washington unless the Administration shows more flexibility than it did during the Achille Lauro incident. Acting on the assumption that Sadat was destroyed partly because he was too pro-American, al-Baz, with Mubarak's endorsement, is trying to restore at least the appearance of independence. "Egypt is not a part of NATO, not a part of the United States and not a part of the strategy of the West," he told me a year ago. "Egypt's purpose is to forge a strategy for the Arab world. That is why we cannot accept any military bases here in Egypt." He complained: "Some people in Washington [that is, Congress] want something tangible to show in return for U.S. aid. The fact that Egypt is a friend is not enough."

When Egypt's privileged position as the second-largest recipient of American aid, after Israel, is in question, however, the leadership plays a different tune. A few weeks after my conversation with al-Baz the State Department received a confidential document from Cairo describing Egypt as a

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major "strategic asset" of the United States. The communiqué, which was drawn up to support a request for a $995 million increase in U.S. economic and military assistance in 1986, cited the numerous times that Cairo had allowed U.S. forces to use Egyptian facilities to support operations elsewhere in the region, including Lebanon, the Sudan and Oman. While making the obligatory bows to nonalignment, "regional priorities" and full control over military bases, the document emphasized that "none of these problems will prevent steadily closer cooperation between Egypt and the U.S."

The Achille Lauro incident was only the most recent indication of the difficulties Egyptians face in staying in the good graces of the Reagan Administration and at the same time trying to regain acceptance in the Arab world. The American demand that Mubarak hand over the hijackers for trial forced the Egyptian leader to choose between placating the United States and breaking an agreement with the Palestinians. Predictably, he received little help from either side. Washington was unsympathetic, and Yasir Arafat, who Mubarak said had agreed to take custody of the gunmen in Tunis, suddenly became unavailable.

The decision to involve Arafat seems to have been an ill-conceived attempt to force him to act like a responsible international figure. Handing the hijackers over to the P.L.O. for trial and punishment, Mubarak explained, "would have proved to the whole world Arafat's commitment to his statements condemning terrorism." In late 1984 al-Baz apparently convinced Mubarak, who had previously avoided staking his prestige on diplomatic gambits, that Egypt could reconcile its American and Arab objectives only by leading an "Arab initiative" to lure the United States back into an active role in Middle East diplomacy. Egyptian efforts contributed greatly to an apparent breakthrough: the agreement in February between Arafat and King Hussein that the P.L.O. and Jordan would "move together toward . . . a peaceful and just settlement of the Middle East crisis . . . on the basis of . . . United Nations and Security Council resolutions." From the Egyptian point of view that statement came close enough to the long-sought recognition of Israel's right to exist to warrant Herculean American efforts to drag the Israelis to the bargaining table. Instead, the U.S. negotiators allowed themselves to be drawn into a bizarre wrangle over which Palestinians the Israelis would let them speak to in preliminary talks.

In the fall events took a turn that the Egyptians viewed with great alarm. President Reagan's endorsement—later changed to mild disapproval—of the Israeli raid on P.L.O. headquarters near Tunis indicated that the Israelis were winning the Administration over to their view that the P.L.O. is purely a terrorist organization and as such deserves no place in future peace negotiations. The harsh U.S. stance on the Achille Lauro incident was further evidence of this trend. "All the maneuvers of the United States indicate that it has agreed to this plan to exclude the P.L.O. from any coming settlement," said al-Baz in an interview published in Egypt on November 1, "and we consider this a dangerous mistake." The Egyptians believe there is no alternative to working with Arafat. Like others in the Arab world, they are exasperated with him and have doubts about whether he still has enough clout to sell an agreement to his people, but they see no credible challenger to his leadership.

The most revealing aspect of Egypt's reaction to the Achille Lauro affair received little attention in the United States. Although the P.L.O. chief's close associate Mohammed Abbas had planned the takeover of the Italian ship, the Egyptians invited Arafat to Cairo and gave him a hero's welcome in November. On previous occasions the government had tightly restricted Arafat's movements, but this time Mubarak permitted him to make a grand political tour, visiting the headquarters of the political parties, private homes, the Islamic University al-Azhar and even Pope Shenuda III, the Patriarch of the Coptic Christian Church. The government-controlled papers ran long interviews with Arafat. An *Al Ahram* headline, "Egypt's stand is necessary to resist the Israeli and American plot against the Palestinian people," sounded the main theme of the visit. Behind the scenes, however, Mubarak and al-Baz browbeat Arafat into pledging that future guerrilla operations would be confined to the "occupied territories."

In a telephone interview, Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, an Egyptian political analyst, drew two conclusions from the Egyptian regime's royal treatment of Arafat. First, he said, "Mubarak cannot afford to lose Arafat because he is his only window into the Arab world." Second, hosting Arafat was "a way to stand up to the Americans after the humiliation suffered at their hands." Mubarak was trying to tell the Americans, "You cannot hit me as you have and assure stability in Egypt. I cannot be ill treated in this way; I cannot afford to be identified only with the U.S. and Israel as Sadat was."

Sid-Ahmed does not think that Egypt is on the verge of a precipitous break with the United States and Israel analogous to Sadat's surprise expulsion of Soviet advisers in 1972. Al-Baz's presence makes such an impulsive action unlikely. "He is very good at keeping things from getting out of control," he said. Still, Sid-Ahmed considers the U.S.-sponsored peace treaty with Israel to be in growing peril. He rightly pinpoints the continued resistance to the development of normal and neighborly relations with Israel as the chief cause of concern. The Egyptians are delighted to sell Israel about $400 million worth of oil each year, and they are keeping their embassy open in Tel Aviv. But they are discouraging nearly all other exchanges between the two countries. Israeli tourists visiting Egypt outnumber Egyptians going in the other direction by at least ten to one. There has been no Egyptian ambassador in Tel Aviv since 1982, when Mubarak withdrew his emissary to protest the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Although the Israelis have sent their best and brightest Arabists to Cairo in hopes of establishing valuable contacts, the vast majority of the Cairo elite refused to mix with them.

An unpleasant expression of anti-Israeli sentiment occurred on October 5, just after the raid on Tunis, when a 24-year-old Egyptian border guard opened fire on a party of

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bathing suit–clad Israeli tourists who approached his position near a beach in Sinai. Seven were killed, including two women and four children. Mubarak sought to minimize the killings as "a small accident" that was the work of a man "who lost his mind," and *Al Ahaly* published an apparently scurrilous report that the tourists had provoked the young man by taunting him and spitting on an Egyptian flag. Another opposition paper, *Al Shaab*, reported that at his trial by military tribunal, from which the press was barred, the soldier told the court, "I don't care if you execute me to please America and Israel." To their credit the Israelis limited their response to this ugly incident to bitter complaints about the conduct of the local authorities, who, according to Israeli Health Minister Mordechai Gur, "did not take the minimum steps to treat casualties" and prevented Israeli medical personnel on hand from administering first aid. The Israelis also were careful not to hold Egypt responsible for the August attack in Cairo in which an employee of their embassy was killed and two others wounded by an unidentified gunman, who sprayed machine-gun fire through their car window. Sooner or later a similar incident could touch off a serious confrontation between the two countries.

The stunted growth of Egyptian-Israeli relations is worrisome because little binds the two countries together beyond the special relationship both have with the United States and the ever-present threat that Israel will reoccupy the Sinai. Egypt's ties to America are much more substantial than those to Israel, mostly because of the massive economic and military assistance programs that U.S. administrations have mounted in Egypt since the 1973 war. Egypt is scheduled to receive $1.3 billion in military aid and $1.29 billion in economic aid in 1986. Certainly the Egyptian leadership would be reluctant to provoke an aid cutoff, particularly at a time when its main sources of foreign exchange are drying up, but those programs no longer guarantee America enormous leverage over Egyptian policy. Egyptian attitudes toward the aid programs have changed radically since the death of Sadat, in 1981. They are no longer seen as a cornucopia of blessings but rather as small potatoes compared with what Israel receives and a sinister means of imposing American tutelage on Egypt.

Some of the strongest supporters of the American connection are senior military officers, who do not wish to see their main source of arms jeopardized. Defense Minister Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazala, a former military attaché in Washington, quickly came to the defense of the United States after the Achille Lauro incident and was sharply criticized in *Al Ahaly* for putting his ties to America ahead of the national interest. The leftist paper also reported that Abu Ghazala pushed Mubarak into the disastrous decision to storm the Egyptair jet in Malta, over the objections of al-Baz.

Egypt's loan repayments to the United States have become a special source of friction between the two countries. With foreign exchange earnings in decline, Egypt is hard pressed to service its $31.5 billion debt. Although all U.S. aid to Egypt is now in the form of grants, military procurement loans prior to 1984 carried interest rates as high as 15 percent. Principal and interest payments on these obligations in 1986 will be $557.3 million. Mubarak's repeated requests for relief have been spurned by Washington. The turndowns rankle for two reasons. First, the terms on Israel's debt are continually being eased; the latest rescheduling proposal could cost the U.S. treasury $531.7 million in 1986. Second, the opposition uses the debt issue to support its contention that Egypt is following a pro-Western foreign policy because of economic blackmail. On September 18, as Mubarak prepared to make his second pilgrimage of 1985 to Washington, *Al Ahaly* commented, "The West is exploiting Egypt's rising debts to step up the pressure so that Egypt does not withdraw from its assigned role in the Western strategic framework." To demonstrate his irritation with the United States, the Egyptian President has let the arrears on Egypt's military debt to the United States build up to more than $400 million.

The opposition would have less to complain about if the economy was still expanding at the 8 percent clip of the late 1970s, but even that high growth turns out to have been illusory. It was fueled almost entirely by revenues from oil exports, Suez Canal tolls, Egyptians working abroad, tourism and foreign aid, all of which were vulnerable to forces beyond Egypt's control, and which have either leveled off or gone into decline. Egypt benefited more from the Arab oil boom than most people realize, and it is feeling the effects of the bust more than some of the exporters in the Persian Gulf because it lacks their ample financial reserves. Lower oil prices have eroded petroleum export earnings from a peak of $2.8 billion in 1981 to $2.3 billion in 1984. The money sent home by the approximately 3 million Egyptians working abroad has also been affected, since Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait and other em-

DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

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ployers of expatriate labor have slashed their spending and forced as many as 500,000 Egyptian workers home.

Mubarak must discover a way of closing an overall payments deficit that the I.M.F. projects at $1.3 billion for 1985. That will not be an easy task. Word of Egypt's problems is already beginning to affect its ability to borrow. For example, the British government's export finance agency has dropped Egypt's credit rating to the poorest-risk category.

In managing the domestic economy, the Egyptians play a game similar to the one they play in foreign affairs. Recent Egyptian governments have talked about self-sufficiency and independence, but in practice they have taken on as much debt and foreign aid as possible in order to avoid hard decisions. Sadat allowed imports to increase 20 percent annually during the fat years of the late 1970s, and in the four months prior to last year's parliamentary elections Mubarak permitted a 30 percent jump in food imports to put his constituents in a good mood. Egypt spends about $5 billion per year on subsidies that stimulate consumption and benefit the rich as well as the poor because the government has never bothered to limit distribution of subsidized items, such as 2 cent loaves of bread, to the neediest.

Now that the lean years are here Mubarak must deal with the consequences of past inaction. He has brought in his third Prime Minister in four years, Ali Lotfi, an economics professor, who is reputedly an austerity-minded budget cutter. The government is holding its first serious negotiations since 1978 with the International Monetary Fund, whose pressures for austerity are widely blamed for the riots that followed the increase in food prices in 1977. In hopes of securing a $1.5 billion loan, Lotfi is promising to cut the subsidies and provide more incentives for foreign investment. There is no reason to think that pain will be any easier to sell in 1985 than it was in 1977. Mubarak's standing is no better now than Sadat's was then, and in 1977 there were no opposition newspapers to tell the masses that they were being asked to make sacrifices for the benefit of the rich and Egypt's American creditors. On the popular black market, the Egyptian pound, always a good barometer of the nation's mood, has already given Mubarak a vote of no confidence by plunging to its all-time low against the dollar.

Mubarak enters what promises to be the most trying period of his presidency in poor shape. Although few doubt either his honesty or his good intentions, his handling of both the Achille Lauro and the Egyptair hijacking have revived the old questions about his leadership. More troubling, he has yet to carve out a constituency for himself. Those who thrived under Sadat mistrust him, while the Nasserites and other leftists will never accept him until he completely repudiates Sadat's policies. Even the military officers, who should be his most reliable supporters, are smarting from their bungling of the Malta raid and unproved charges that they leaked Mubarak's plans for the Achille Lauro gunmen to the Americans.

Barring economic and diplomatic miracles, Mubarak faces stepped-up pressure from the leftists, the liberals and the Islamic fundamentalists, who, although incapable of toppling him, are already making his job difficult. It is not hard to foresee a chaotic political atmosphere developing that might provoke an impulsive move by Mubarak or someone else. □

SUPPLY-SIDE KNOWLEDGE

# Information—A Shrinking Resource

HERBERT I. SCHILLER

Like McDonald's and Lee Iacocca, the information industry in this country seems beyond criticism. The major media are dazzled by surface phenomena: the undeniable technical wizardry of the new electronic systems of data and image projection, the increasing number of jobs being created in the information industry, the utilization of sophisticated "instructed" equipment. Adding to the general bedazzlement is the blinding rapidity with which computers have been installed in government bureaus, commercial offices and service industries. Artifacts of the information age have become a routine sight—product scanners in supermarkets, cash registers that resemble the control panels of jumbo jets, electronically coded plastic cards instead of room keys in motels, computer terminals replacing card catalogues in libraries.

The commercial utilization of information has become a central force in our society, yet there has been an almost complete absence of discussion of the political and policy issues it raises. One of the most important of those issues is the danger posed to a free society by private ownership of information. Businesses now vie for a greater share of the nation's information supply. Facts have become profitable commodities, a resource to be owned, like oil, iron ore or land, and made available only on an ability-to-pay basis.

As a result, a silent struggle is being waged between those who wish to appropriate the country's information resources for private gain and those who favor the fullest availability. The latter have been in steady retreat. Two of the major generators of information, the Federal government and the universities, are succumbing to the forces of privatization. In 1981, alarmed by this trend, the American Library Association began keeping a log of government restraints on information, with the apt title "Less Access to Less Information By and About the U.S. Government."

The drive to privatize public information has been enormously facilitated by the Reagan Administration's commitment to dismantling the government's social welfare functions. It has pursued that objective from within the bureau-

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cracy, through the Office of Management and Budget, which has been elevated to a superagency, presiding over the plans, programs and information activities of all the other agencies. The O.M.B. is spearheading the effort to reduce the government's traditional responsibility to collect, compile and disseminate information.

By O.M.B. edict, many government publications that serve the needs of the general public have been discontinued [see Ralph Nader, "Don't Let the Sunshine In," *The Nation*, November 7, 1981]. Further cutbacks are scheduled. More destructive still, the customary organizers of a large part of the national information supply, the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Health and Human Services et al., are being compelled to justify their statistical and data-collection projects to a generally hostile overseer.

Meanwhile, private companies are demanding, with the encouragement of the O.M.B., the right to acquire, organize and disseminate what they regard as the most profitable items in the national data stockpile. As the influence and range of the private firms expand, there is a corresponding diminution of the role of bodies that have traditionally served the public interest.

The role of the Federal Depository Library Program in collecting and circulating government publications is being undermined by the unavailability of those documents. Budgetary constraints have prevented it from acquiring the latest electronic equipment for information delivery. The scholarly riches reposing in the National Archives have been made less accessible because of funding cutbacks. Federal libraries, which set the standard for libraries across the nation, are starved for funds, and many of their activities have been contracted out to private firms.

Another raid on the national information stockpile, still in the experimental stage, may come in the initial stage of data collection. The government has approved pilot programs in which private contractors manage the electronic filing, processing and dissemination of data that businesses and individuals are required to submit to government agencies and commissions. The data include the more than 100,000 applications that the Patent and Trademarks Office receives annually and the disclosure documents that publicly held companies must file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

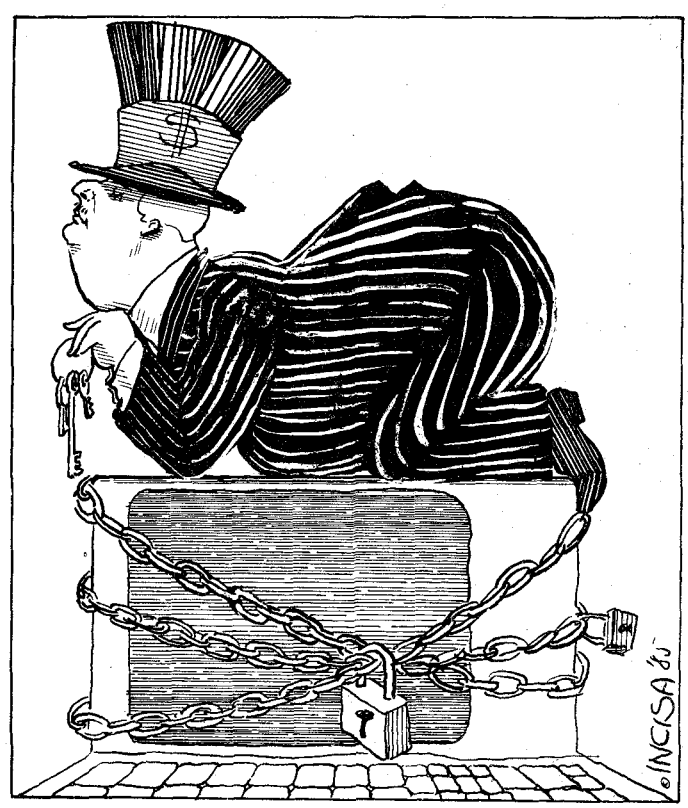
These private arrangements raise a host of questions. Will they affect the accuracy and quality of the data? Who will decide what will be stored and what discarded? How will public access to this material be insured? Who owns the data after it is processed by private firms? Such queries were raised by Representative Glenn English, chair of the House Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice and Agriculture, at hearings in March 1984.

Public access to government information is further diminished by the Administration's—especially the Pentagon's—secrecy mania. Exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act have been multiplying. Classification of government documents is booming. Export controls have been clamped on a growing body of technical data at the behest of the Pentagon. A security blanket has been wrapped around the proceedings of nongovernmental scientific meetings, with the Defense Department intervening to classify papers as "sensitive." In November, Samuel L. Morison, a Defense Department employee, was sentenced to two years in prison under the Espionage Act for leaking photographs of a Soviet aircraft carrier to the British publication *Jane's Defence Weekly*. The only information that has become more available is personal data on individuals collected by government agencies and private companies, for instance insurance and credit bureaus, which combine their disparate holdings by "matching files" in different computerized data bases.

At the nation's universities, too, the dynamic of information commercialization is at work. "The relationship between academe and business is more cordial than it has been in decades," reports a recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. "The sectors are increasingly resembling each other." The crucial connection is information.

Corporations aim to siphon off the findings in the academic laboratories and institutes for their own profit. With few exceptions, administrators of the top schools, squeezed by declining public support, have welcomed corporate offers of money, computers, laboratories and research facilities, and contributions to the salaries and upkeep of marketable professors. As proprietary interests take precedence over free scholarly exchanges, a wall is erected between the public and new ideas, discoveries and controversies. Corporations don't fund research to have the results circulated to all comers.

In sum, the national information supply is an endangered resource. Public custodianship is being curtailed. Corporate control, which allows access only to those who can afford to

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pay for it, is being promoted. The flow of ideas from academia is being diverted into restricted, corporate channels. And the militarization of large chunks of economic activity lowers a security curtain over what should be publicly available information.

Although the press could examine these dismaying developments and alert the nation to them, it has been of little help. Media owners, busily linking disparate communication resources into giant chains and networks, have no interest in informing the public of these trends. Recently, Charles Kinsolving, the vice president for marketing/new technology of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, predicted that by 1995 "90 percent of all communication facilities, including newspapers, broadcast outlets, cable systems, telephone lines, relays and satellites, [will be] in the hands of fifteen companies." But in the face of the overwhelming evidence of increased concentration in the communications industry, the Federal Communications Commission fanatically continues on its deregulatory course. The commission points to the existence of nearly 10,000 FM and AM radio stations, 1,200 educational and commercial television stations and about 10,000 newspapers in arguing that there is no need to enforce the Fairness Doctrine, which requires broadcasters to provide time for opposing views. Competition, it claims, will insure diversity of opinion.

The trend toward conglomerate ownership of those outlets makes the statistics of their apparent abundance meaningless, however. It is fantasy to say that each of them is autonomous. One might as well say that General Motors has no control over its Chevrolet, Buick and Cadillac divisions.

Not only does the awesome concentration of ownership of the media have a numbing effect on diversity of expression in news and entertainment; it endangers the political process as well by raising the price of participation. Candidates depend on television coverage, radio announcements, computerized direct-mail drives and opinion polling to wage a successful campaign. Those who cannot afford such accouterments of the modern campaign are left to speak on street corners.

But robust democracy requires that access to the information apparatus be available to all on an equal basis, not just to those who can pay for it. The loss of revenue commercial broadcasters might suffer if free time was given to all candidates should not be a consideration. The current system requires candidates for national office to raise millions of dollars to purchase television and radio time, making them beholden to the wealthiest interest groups and political action committees.

While media barons exact their tribute from political candidates, corporations claim that their commercial statements are entitled to the protection of the First Amendment. Because they have the money to buy media access, their speech overwhelms individual expression. Thus, while people have a harder time getting the information they need to vote, to make intelligent consumer decisions, to understand their world, corporate speech, invested with full First Amendment privileges, saturates the media.

A national debate about the character, objectives and direction of the information society is long overdue. The political task ahead is to develop strategies for expanding the public information supply without resorting to the ability-to-pay mechanism. Social accountability must be restored to broadcasting, which means reversing the deregulatory fever that has encouraged concentration of ownership in the media. The chilling role of the O.M.B. should be recognized for what it is: an assault on the social responsibilities of government, particularly information gathering and dissemination. Finally, the Pentagon's dominant position in the information sector, resulting from massive spending on research and development, must be undercut. Only then will the wave of secrecy and classification begin to subside.

Does sufficient vigor remain in the political system to reverse the present trend? One can see signs of growing dissent. The presidents of a dozen of the most prestigious national engineering and scientific societies recently wrote a letter to Caspar Weinberger cautioning against the "new controls being applied by the Department of Defense to unclassified technical information." The American Library Association continues to defend the principle of free access to information. A few Congressional committees have begun to explore information issues. The extent to which these few groups and voices can be multiplied and transformed into unified, politically effective expression will determine whether the information society fulfills or thwarts human needs. □

# Doctrine

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

begun to develop strategy and tactics for low-level warfare, and the Army has commissioned a study of combat requirements for any U.S. force that might be sent to fight in Central America. As in the heyday of counterinsurgency, the military press is full of theoretical studies of antiguerrilla warfare. In the January 1985 issue of *Military Review*, the journal of the Army's Command and General Staff College, Col. James B. Motley wrote, "The most important security challenge confronting the United States . . . is to improve its military capabilities for low-intensity conflict."

The growing popularity of L.I.C. doctrine stems from two interrelated phenomena: the armed services' desire to develop a publicly acceptable formula for the use of force in regional conflicts, and the Reagan Administration's desire to build public support for its military campaign against pro-Soviet forces and regimes in the Third World. Both of those drives have encountered resistance from many Americans who remember the Vietnam War with considerable distaste. On the other hand, they also have sparked a comprehensive government effort to devise a persuasive rationale for military intervention. That is what L.I.C. doctrine is in-

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tended to do. It contains both a strategic blueprint for military activities abroad and a political program for manipulating public opinion at home. While counterinsurgency planning stressed the threat to American interests posed by Third World revolutions, L.I.C. emphasizes the threat of terrorism, political turmoil and Soviet expansionism. In both cases, the favored solution is a mobilization of political will to overcome those threats through the vigorous application of military force.

"We cannot allow ourselves to become the Hamlet of nations, worrying endlessly over whether and how to respond," Secretary of State George Shultz declared in a 1984 address on terrorism. To defeat terrorism, he averred, we must have "a broad public consensus on the moral and strategic necessity of action"—meaning, in particular, military action. This quest for a political "consensus" on the use of force is what makes L.I.C. doctrine so dangerous to American society.

To appreciate the risks posed by low-intensity conflict, we must understand the doctrine's military aspects and its political-ideological component. It is useful to begin with the legacy of Vietnam.

### Counterinsurgency Redux

Low-level combat—called "brushfire war" and the like—emerged as a major concern of U.S. military officials in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when a series of revolutionary upheavals in the Third World demonstrated the vulnerability of American-backed dictators to the people's-war strategies of Mao Zedong, Chè Guevara and Ho Chi Minh. In response the Kennedy Administration embraced the doctrine of counterinsurgency, a hybrid strategy combining traditional military tactics with political and economic measures intended to win the "hearts and minds" of the people. Kennedy also upgraded the Army Special Forces (the Green Berets) and created other "special" units for the implementation of counterinsurgency tactics.

To test the strategy and to demonstrate its efficacy to would-be guerrillas everywhere, Kennedy in 1961 authorized the deployment of several hundred Green Berets and other counterinsurgency experts to South Vietnam. When they failed to defeat the guerrilla forces, Kennedy sent still more advisers, to protect the "credibility" of the U.S. counterinsurgency mission. Ultimately those advisers had to be joined by regular combat troops, and the war thence became a major test of U.S. strength and endurance.

In the wake of the Vietnam disaster, counterinsurgency was discredited and Congress followed a policy of avoiding direct American military involvement in Third World conflicts. This so-called Vietnam syndrome was expressed in the War Powers Act, the Clark amendment (prohibiting U.S. involvement in the civil war in Angola) and a ban on U.S. military and police assistance to repressive Third World regimes.

For a time most U.S. leaders supported those measures and resisted any move that would embroil the United States in Third World conflicts. After the fall of the Shah of Iran, however, many policy-makers called for a revival of U.S.

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interventionist capability. Their demand became official government policy in June 1979, when the Carter Administration activated the Rapid Deployment Force and dispatched a Navy-Marine contingent to the Indian Ocean area. (The timing of that decision—three months before the U.S. Embassy in Teheran was seized and six months before the Russians invaded Afghanistan—is significant, since most Americans think Carter acted in response to those events, rather than as a result of government policy.)

The moves, however, were not sufficiently vigorous to reassure a jittery public, and Carter succumbed to Ronald Reagan in 1980. Once in the White House, Reagan moved quickly to increase military spending and to accelerate the development and deployment of new weapons systems. He also campaigned energetically to reduce opposition to the application of U.S. military power abroad, but he encountered unexpectedly stiff resistance. Although most Americans endorsed the attack on Grenada and the interception of the Achille Lauro hijackers, they showed little enthusiasm for the Beirut occupation and have serious doubts about the wisdom of direct U.S. military involvement in Central America. A formula that would justify intervention in the Third World has, therefore, been a major Administration objective.

## The Lethal Spectrum

With the introduction of L.I.C. doctrine, the White House believes it has found the right approach. The name itself is reassuring. By stressing the limited nature of the combat involved, the doctrine suggests that the United States will continue to avoid entanglement in Third World conflicts. Moreover, by emphasizing the threat of terrorism, it can be portrayed as a reactive policy, a prudent and legitimate response to violence, instability, anti-Americanism and Soviet aggression abroad.

The term "low-intensity conflict" derives from what U.S. military planners call the spectrum of conflict, a range of increasing military violence from low- to mid- to high-intensity conventional fighting, and thence to limited, theater and intercontinental nuclear war. The L.I.C. band of the spectrum ranges from terrorism and civil violence through guerrilla warfare, police operations, border skirmishes and other engagements below the threshold of full-scale war. According to Pentagon strategists, the Vietnam War fell into the L.I.C. category for most of its duration, though with the massive U.S. air attacks on the North and the invasion of Cambodia, it escalated to a higher level, to "mid-intensity conflict." The L.I.C. designation also applies to the current fighting in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Lebanon, the Philippines and Central America.

## The L.I.C. Triad

As now conceived by Administration officials, L.I.C. doctrine embraces three distinct types of military operations: classic counterinsurgency, "active" defense against terrorism and "pro-insurgency." Each one, as noted below, entails a significant risk of military escalation.

*Classic counterinsurgency* is the type of warfare practiced by the United States in the early stages of the Vietnam War. It combines military measures, aimed at combating rural guerrilla forces, with political, economic and psychological operations, aimed at neutralizing peasant support for the revolutionary underground. Although rarely employed by American forces since the debacle in Vietnam, these tactics are now being used by government troops in El Salvador under U.S. tutelage. The air strikes against rebel-held villages, the recurrent search and destroy operations, the military's "civic action" projects, are direct borrowings from the Vietnam War (and, before that, from the British campaigns in Kenya and Malaya).

The problem with such operations is that many of the governments they are intended to protect are so alienated from the people that they cannot successfully conduct a political-military campaign without excessive outside help. As we discóvered in Vietnam, classic counterinsurgency cannot work when the prevailing regime lacks popular legitimacy and cannot mobilize at least some grass-roots support for its antiguerrilla efforts. In such cases an increasing number of U.S. troops must be substituted for the regime's unreliable soldiers. This process is already under way in El Salvador, where U.S. personnel now exercise responsibility for the day-to-day management of combat operations, and is likely to occur in the Philippines if the United States assumes a more direct role in the counterguerrilla effort. Counterinsurgency, then, is not a method for avoiding U.S. entanglement in Third World conflicts but rather a formula for ever-deepening involvement.

*"Active" defense against terrorism* is the Reagan Administration's answer to what is perceived as an upsurge of anti-American violence originating in the Third World. Originally terrorism was viewed as a form of nonmilitary combat that fell below the threshold of L.I.C. Following the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, however, terrorism was redefined as a full-fledged military threat to the United States, requiring an appropriate response. That view was incorporated into National Security Decision Directive No. 138, approved by President Reagan on April 3, 1984.

Although the text of the directive has not been made public, officials familiar with it say that it calls for "proactive" military measures, including pre-emptive raids against suspected terrorist strongholds and retaliatory raids against countries suspected of harboring terrorists. Thus, as suggested by Secretary of State Shultz in 1984, the new policy holds that "our responses [to terrorism] should go beyond passive defense to consider means of active prevention, pre-emption and retaliation." That principle underlies the repeated U.S. threats to bomb alleged terrorist strongholds in Lebanon in response to any new attacks on U.S. personnel in Beirut, and the U.S. interception of the Egyptian airliner carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers.

Like counterinsurgency, such a policy carries a built-in potential for escalation. A U.S. military strike against suspected terrorist bases in another country, however "surgical" in execution, would constitute an act of war against that country and could provoke a military response. If that response were directed against American forces—say,

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the aircraft carriers used to launch the U.S. retaliatory strike—the United States could find itself drawn into a full-scale shooting war.

*Pro-insurgency*, or active support for what are defined as anti-Communist rebellions in the Third World, is the Administration's favored response to perceived Soviet expansionism. Often described as the Reagan Doctrine, this policy holds that the United States should assist in the overthrow of pro-Soviet regimes. "For too long," Under Secretary of State William Schneider Jr. told a Senate subcommittee in 1985, "the free nations have restricted themselves to drawing lines in the dust, conceding the Communists their conquests while at most seeking to resist further conquests." Now we must "put the would-be totalitarians on the defensive, to help put uncertainty into their imperialist plans."

Although primarily described as a natural expression of American support for the forces of freedom and democracy abroad, this stance is also justified as a practical measure for promoting U.S. security interests. Depicting the rise of leftist governments in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nicaragua as evidence of a global power shift toward the Soviet Union, Administration officials argue that U.S. military aid to antigovernment forces could result in the diminution of Soviet power. "When the United States supports those resisting totalitarianism," Shultz explained in February, "we do so not only out of our historical sympathy for democracy and freedom but also, in many cases, in the interests of national security." The principle underlies the Administration's rationale for aid to the anti-Sandinista *contras* and to rebel forces in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and other Third World countries allied with the Soviet Union.

Such a policy entails just as high a risk of escalation as do the other components of L.I.C. doctrine. By providing military assistance to forces engaged in combat against a sovereign government, we become a party to that conflict and thus invite retaliation. That becomes even more likely when U.S. advisers and combat personnel are stationed in active war zones or at support bases in adjacent countries (in the case of the *contra* war, U.S. forces are deployed in Honduras). Should the government that the United States wants to overthrow strike back at the insurgents' support bases, the U.S. contingent could suffer significant casualties or the host government could appeal for American help. Either contingency would provide a clear-cut pretext for full-scale U.S. intervention.

### Shultz Grasps the Nettle—Intervention

Surprisingly, the leading advocate of the new doctrine is not Caspar Weinberger, long considered the principal hawk in the Reagan entourage, but George Shultz, who is generally viewed as a moderate in Administration policy struggles. While Weinberger has cautiously defined the conditions under which U.S. forces would be deployed in Third World conflicts, Shultz has campaigned vigorously against falling prey to the Vietnam syndrome and has championed both the use of military force to combat terrorism and support for anti-Soviet insurgencies in the Third World. More important, Shultz has introduced a sweeping thesis, akin to John Foster Dulles's containment policy, to justify U.S. military intervention on a global scale.

Shultz's argument is based on two precepts: first, that the forces of democracy (loosely defined to include any country or political formation allied with the West) are threatened by a global terrorist offensive launched by radical regimes or organizations allied with the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya or Iran; and second, that the United States, the leader of the democratic forces, has a responsibility not only to resist but to destroy the terrorist threat. Shultz has enunciated those precepts in three major speeches: his April 3, 1984, address to the Trilateral Commission in Washington, his October 25, 1984, appearance at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City and his February 22, 1985, talk at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

Shultz begins with a highly politicized and distorted view of terrorism. "What once may have seemed the random, senseless, violent acts of a few crazed individuals has come into clearer focus," he said in his New York address. "We have learned that terrorism is, above all, a form of political violence. . . . wherever it takes place, [it] is directed in an important sense against *us*, the democracies—against our most basic values and often our fundamental strategic interest." Ignoring the terrorist threat posed by neo-Fascist groups in Italy and right-wing death squads in Latin America, Shultz claimed that most terrorist activities originate among antidemocratic elements on the left. And although he acknowledged that individual terrorists may be motivated by wholly personal or sectarian grievances, he added that "states that support and sponsor terrorist actions have managed in recent years to co-opt and manipulate the terrorist phenomenon in pursuit of their own strategic goals."

Faced with this challenge, Shultz argued, the United States can no longer afford to remain passive and reactive. Although we are relatively well prepared to deter a nuclear attack, we are not "organized to deter and counter the 'gray area' of intermediate challenges that we are more likely to face, the low-intensity conflict of which terrorism is a part."

It is at this point that Shultz tackles Weinberger and the Vietnam syndrome. "It is often said that the lesson of Vietnam is that the United States should not engage in military conflict without a clear and precise military mission [and] solid public backing," he told his Washington audience. Does that mean that there are no situations where "a discreet assertion of power is needed or appropriate"? The answer is no. "The need to avoid no-win situations," he said, "cannot mean that we turn automatically away from hard-to-win situations that call for prudent involvement."

Having established that force is legitimate in some situations, Shultz called for an active military response to state-supported terrorism: "We now recognize that terrorism is being used by our adversaries as a modern tool of warfare" against "our strategic interests around the world." Given the nature of the threat, we are fully justified in using

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military power to overcome it. "We should understand that terrorism is aggression and, like all aggression, must be forcefully resisted."

The logic behind another component of the Administration's L.I.C. doctrine—the provision of U.S. aid for anti-Soviet insurgencies in the Third World—was first set forth by Secretary Shultz in his San Francisco address. "Where once the Soviets may have thought that all discontent was ripe for turning into Communist insurgencies," he said, "today we see a new and different kind of struggle: people around the world risking their lives against Communist despotism." This "democratic revolution," as he put it, is most apparent in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola and Nicaragua, where self-professed freedom fighters are combating Soviet-backed totalitarian regimes. And whereas "any victory of Communism was held to be irreversible," today we can hope for the victory of these "democratic forces" over Communist tyranny.

Proclaiming that the United States has a "moral responsibility" to support freedom fighters in their struggle against totalitarianism, Shultz says that such assistance must go beyond moral support to include material and even military aid. "The forces of freedom cannot place their trust in declarations alone," he stated.

It is not possible in an article of this length to discuss the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions in Shultz's thesis, but it should be obvious to anyone with even the barest grasp of history that many of the regimes that have fallen to leftist insurgencies, including those in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Angola and Mozambique, were colonial artifacts or military dictatorships lacking even the slightest pretension to democratic rule. It is equally evident that the *contras* and many of the other forces championed by Shultz have a brutal and bloody record that belies any claim of their being democratic. What is important here, however, is not to critique the specifics but rather to reconstruct the basic thrust of Shultz's argument: a nation or movement allied with Moscow is, by definition, an instrument of terrorism and totalitarianism; thus, by extension, the opponents of these nations or forces are the guardians of democracy and U.S. national security and are worthy recipients of U.S. military aid.

## Gathering Support

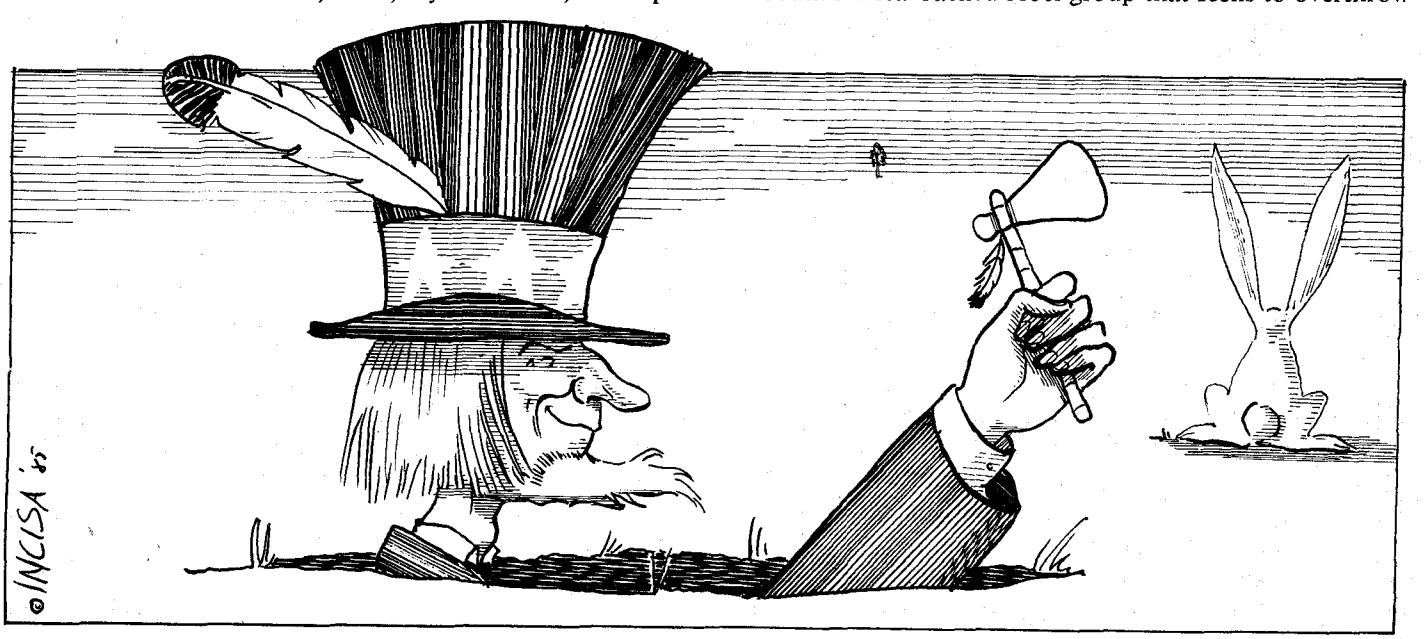
Shultz's thesis constitutes the ideological rationale for U.S. aid to the *contras* and other right-wing insurgents, and is being used to build a case for direct U.S. military action against Nicaragua, Libya, Cuba and other countries. Unless repudiated, it will govern U.S. foreign policy for a generation, if not longer.

Unfortunately, the possibility of repudiation looks slim. The Shultz view is attracting growing support among U.S. policy-making and media elites. The "strike back at terrorism" approach has already received widespread Congressional approval, and opposition to the pro-insurgency policy has substantially diminished. Congress has also increased funding for the Special Operation Forces and other units committed to L.I.C. actions.

What is especially worrisome is that significant elements of the Democratic Party appear to have embraced the doctrine at least partially, as witnessed by two recent votes in the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives:

§ On June 12 the House voted 248 to 184 to provide $27 million in nonmilitary aid to the *contras*, reversing an earlier decision to ban any form of U.S. assistance. Although the White House had to make some compromises to gain a majority—the measure includes no arms aid and prohibits the Central Intelligence Agency from dispensing the money—the appearance of seventy-three Democrats in the pro-aid column was considered a major victory for President Reagan's Nicaragua policy.

§ On July 10 the House voted 236 to 185 to repeal the Clark amendment. Long advocated by Republican legislators, the motion finally passed with the help of sixty Democrats. Repeal of the amendment will enable the Administration to provide economic and military aid to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita), a South Africa-backed rebel group that seeks to overthrow

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the Angolan government, which is supported by Cuba. And while the White House prefers to aid Unita through covert channels, Representative Claude Pepper of Florida, a Democrat, introduced a bill in October calling for $27 million in overt, nonmilitary aid to Unita.

Accompanying those votes has been the growing adoption of Shultz-like rhetoric by leading Democrats. One of the most prominent disciples is Representative Stephen Solarz of New York, who has undertaken to fashion a more hawkish stance for the Democratic Party. "If Democrats are going to regain the confidence of the American public," he wrote in a *New York Times* Op-Ed article in June, "we will have to develop a new, and more tough-minded, consensus on foreign policy." Forging such a consensus, he noted, will require adoption of a vigorous promilitary posture and a "resolute anti-Communist policy." It also means—and herein lies the debt to Shultz—"resisting Communist expansionism in the Third World by providing arms and aid to non-Communist forces, such as those in Afghanistan and Cambodia, resisting Communist invasion and occupation of their countries."

Solarz is not uncritical in his endorsement of the Shultz doctrine: he opposes U.S. military aid to Unita and the *contras*. However, by endorsing U.S. support for the insurgencies he approves of, he lends legitimacy to the Administration's drive to gain public backing for aid to groups he disapproves of. Furthermore, by appearing to speak for the "moderate" wing of the party, he will only encourage the wholesale adoption of Shultz-style rhetoric on other key foreign policy issues, with all that implies for future U.S. relations with the Third World.

## Mobilizing the Left

The growing adherence to L.I.C. doctrine in Washington and the accompanying popularity of the Shultz doctrine pose an enormous challenge to those on the left who oppose American military intervention in Central America and elsewhere in the Third World. Unless we can advance a persuasive critique of Administration logic and introduce a credible noninterventionist response to terrorism and other Third World perils, we will lose the support and sympathy of more and more Americans. At that point the White House will be able to claim to speak for the majority. And when that happens, there will be pitifully few domestic restraints against another round of interventionism.

The ascendancy of the Shultz doctrine will also pollute the domestic political atmosphere. If U.S. intervention in the Third World is defined as a necessary defense of freedom and democracy, those who oppose it are perforce enemies of democracy and, by extension, legitimate targets of government repression. Indeed, perhaps the most frightening aspect of the Administration's public explication of its L.I.C. doctrine is the degree to which language is distorted to justify a policy that is the opposite of the prodemocratic one the Administration claims to be pursuing in its foreign relations. If that distortion is allowed to continue unchallenged, we could face a serious threat to our *own* rights and liberties.

Dangerous as the new doctrine is, it presents the left with an opportunity. If the Democratic Party emulates the hawkish posture of the Reagan Administration, it will abandon its claim to be the principal bulwark against another Vietnam, creating space for the formation of a broadly based, grass-roots alliance against interventionism. If animated by a vigorous critique of Shultz's thesis and a strong commitment to global democracy, such an alliance could prove to be a potent political force in this country. Ultimately it is our only sure defense against another decade of war, repression and domestic turmoil. □

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## The Moral Bypass

*We have replaced our customary year-end list of editors' favorite books with a series of remarks on one of this year's most significant works,* Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life, *by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. (University of California Press, $16.95). Not the least of the book's virtues is that its authors invite rejoinder. We have taken them at their word.*

*—The Editors*

BARBARA EHRENREICH

The most numbing phrase in the American vocabulary must be "local government," followed by "Federal government" and then, perhaps, by "electoral politics." Even "Sears catalogue" carries livelier possibilities, in everyday usage, than those terms that refer to our collective enterprise as citizens; and, if I still have your attention, I would include among those words and phrases that inspire talk show hosts to change the subject and neighbors to retreat to their own backyards: "social policy," "Federal programs" and, of course, "politics" itself. Not all nationalities are so repelled by their own communal affairs. Europeans and those Latin Americans who are free to speak without disappearing into permanent silence still consider public issues to be an acceptable subject for cafe chitchat. Even Russian émigrés complain about the American aversion to political discussion. We who officially value freedom of speech above life itself seem to have nothing to talk about but the weather.

Why are public matters so bereft of content—or, let us say, mere interest—for most Americans? That is not, in itself, a strictly political question; the decline of citizenship cannot be plotted along a straightforward left-right axis. It is not only liberals who are misfits today; so is the odd person who follows policy closely and eagerly for some purpose other than divining his or her own tax liability. As dozens of commentators have observed, American culture has been privatized, atomized and perhaps irreversibly idiotized by the combination of television and Epcot-style education. The consumer culture, which we enjoy in our "private" lives, is sensuous and thrilling, while the public sphere, represented by the Internal Revenue Service and the occasional ghastly Presidential intrusion on our regularly scheduled programming, lies before us as a desert.

*Habits of the Heart* is the latest and perhaps the kindest attempt to assess the American character and figure out whether we might still amount to something. In the grand tradition of David Riesman—and the less grand tradition of any number of neoconservative nags—Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven Tipton find that we have, for the most part, lost the way but that the stuff of redemption lies all around us, if we are only willing to give it a try. They have talked to hundreds of Americans about work, love, success, religion and civic affairs; and when I say they are kind, it is because they seem to have listened with such patience and with none of the arrogance their subjects might easily have provoked. Most of these people get fatuous and silly when they try to talk about "values" and "commitments"; no transcendent purpose lights up their lives, and history as a human project eludes them utterly. But others of them are fine people (a number of local political activists are profiled), and all of them would like to find some meaning to life beyond the next promotion or home improvement. Out of such humble aspirations, the authors believe, we may fashion a more engaging notion of citizenship and perhaps turn back the rising tide of barbarism.

Like others before them, and I think primarily of Christopher Lasch, Bellah and his colleagues find Americans crippled by the very individualism that is supposed to be our proudest trait. Once it was the "utilitarian individualism" of capitalism's rugged early years; now it is the softer "expressive individualism" of the consumer society. Riesman charted this character transformation three decades ago, but Bellah et al. add a fine dissection of the therapeutic mentality, which has become our dominant ideology. In it, each self is seen as pursuing its own trajectory, accompanied by its own little planetary system of values, seeking to negotiate the best possible deal from the various "relationships" that come along. Since all values appear to be idiosyncratic satellites of the self, and since we have no way to understand the "self" as a product of all the other selves—present and in historical memory—we have no way of engaging each other in moral discourse, much less in a routine political argument. As a result, life is not only a lonely business but, as the authors point out, an ascetic one. To be these pleasure-seeking, inaccessible selves, we must learn to repress and deny the *amour sociale* that calls us to one another and to what is most human in us all.

But I have perhaps stated their case a little too floridly, for *Habits of the Heart* is not only a kind book but an awfully *nice* book, with no undertones of mad optimism or wild grief. I realized it would be that way at the first of many hundreds of invocations of de Tocqueville, whose name, in settings like this, is a reliable banner signifying great blandness to come. Indeed, Bellah and his crew have no ear at all for the nuttiness that lies just one cortical layer under all this therapeutic, self-optimizing rationality. In my experience, if I may introduce an empirical quibble, most Americans may talk about "impacting this" and "impacting that," or "following Plan A or Plan B," as the people quoted here do, but give them a few hours and a sympathetic face to look at and they'll be telling you about the Bermuda Triangle, or a personal appearance by Jesus or a deceased relative, or what they were doing 300 years ago in another incarnation. When social life lacks a transcendent dimension, people start cultivating secret visions and hustling the occult. But, for that matter, isn't it also patently mad to describe the great and wrenching turning point of one's life in the language of one-minute management, as a choice between Plan A and Plan B?

If the authors haven't detected any nuttiness, neither have they found much pain in the heart of America. Part of this may be a result of the selection process; many of their informants are either therapists or graduates of the therapeutic experience and have presumably mastered the art of upbeat, positivistic self-presentation. Then, too, all the informants are white and middle-class, even wealthy in some cases. But

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even given these restrictions, where are the drunks, the secret abusers of wives and children, the divorcées sliding toward destitution, the veterans who wake up screaming in the night, the racists and Rambo fans? Pain and madness show up only rarely and only in the margins of *Habits of the Heart*.

If the problems discovered by Bellah and his colleagues are moderate and containable, so too are the solutions. We need social movements, they tell us, because movements can anchor our fretful selves in the community of purpose we so deeply crave. That is true, and the political activists who are interviewed come across as admirable people, whether one's criteria come from twentieth-century psychology or eighteenth-century republicanism. But there is a problem in looking to social movements to ease our souls: people can find community and purpose in a movement to exclude black children from the local schools just as surely as they can in a more just and generous cause. In fact, if the problem is to save the troubled, fragmented souls of the middle class, why not turn at once to that ready-made institution of salvation, transcendent purpose and community—organized religion? Indeed this is what Bellah et al. recommend, telling us in the hushed tones that secular scholars reserve for the sacred and mysterious that "it would seem that a vital and enduring religious individualism"—which is, apparently, a good kind of individualism—"can only survive in a renewed relationship with established religious bodies."

Well, this is Daniel Bell all over again, who went to the mountaintop in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, surveyed the wreckage of our hedonistic, consumerist civilization and prescribed religion as the glue that would bring us together and put some starch in our backbones. Perhaps there is some index social scientists use that lists under "Cohesion, Social" such entries as "tradition" or, if that doesn't work, "religion." But powerful, communitarian religious feeling can no more be willed into existence and applied to social problems than "tradition" can. (As an atheist I think I understand that as well as anyone.) Neither, for that matter, can social movements be conjured up to heal the spiritually lost and the psychotherapeutically misguided. Religious passion, like political passion, has an elemental quality that must forever elude the cautious reformer and would-be social engineer.

I could go on, in a dogmatic vein, about the evils of organized religion, particularly some of the fundamentalist varieties that the authors cast a mild, uncritical eye on in their search for community. True, you will find community in the likes of Jerry Falwell's Lynchburg congregation; you will also find meanness, bigotry, sexism and sleaze. But quite apart from the question of the social value of religion, I think it is unbearably patronizing for social scientists, who are about the most paradigmatically secular folks around, to recommend religion for everyone else. If modernism hasn't worked out all that well, then let us all march into postmodernism—whatever that is exactly—together. It's not fair for a few prescient scholars, coiled over their word processors, to send the rest of us marching back to traditions like original sin, premarital (female) virginity and the willfull ignorance of biology, physics and cosmology.

It seems to me that the book's prescription reflects something very like the therapeutic mentality its authors decry. If the problem is our character, our hearts, the fragile and jury-rigged "selves" we propel through life, then there are indeed all kinds of possible solutions, including religion, civic activism or perhaps a new and superior kind of therapy. What will actually work? Presumably we'll have to see what makes us feel better, more "authentic," "whole," etc. In other words, we'll be traveling the same solipsistic closed circuit so well described in *Habits of the Heart*—casting about for some values to define ourselves with and testing them by seeing if they "feel right," with no external reference point, no actual "others" to suffuse the universe with moral gravity.

But the problem is not just the emptiness of middle-class American life, even for the emptiest among us. The problem includes all the pain and dread that has been pressed back into the margins and final, wistful pages of *Habits of the Heart*: the hunger of the world's majority, the draining misery of most people's daily labor, torture and repression, the threat of nuclear annihilation. If we who are currently comfortable and affluent need a moral reference point, we will not find it in the mirror tricks of therapy *or* religion, but in other people's pain.

At the risk of sounding sectarian, I would say there is one other way in which *Habits of the Heart* fails to rise above the depoliticized culture it describes so well. One of the most important messages of the book is that we have lost the vocabulary for collective moral discourse. Even the activists interviewed, like Campaign for Economic Democracy organizer Wayne Bauer, stumble when they try to explain what they're working for and how it all adds up. Now, there *is* one word that would help here, at least as another reference point, and that is "socialism." I do not mean to suggest that "socialism," dangled in front of the alienated middle class or stamped in large letters in the final paragraphs of books like this, would wake us from our daze. The word has become too alien, some would say too sullied by historical experience, to address the yearning in our hearts. But it is still the only word we have that attempts to bridge the gap between our private notions of decency and morality and the public sphere of the political economy. And it is still the only vision we have—the only modernist vision that is—of a world in which individual desire might be reconciled with collective need. To neglect the socialist tradition and possibility as much as Bellah and his colleagues do is to contribute to the impoverishment of the political imagination they have so ably documented.

Still, *Habits of the Heart* has an urgent message for the left. If what we are up against is not "false consciousness" but the civic *un*consciousness of the therapeutic mentality, then we will not get far with a dessicated, technocratic approach to politics. "Economic alternatives" and the like, no matter how humane, will not rouse people to a stirring new vision of public life. We need a politics that speaks more directly to the heart and to the repressed need for social connectedness that lies buried there, bruised and stunted. Some will conclude that we can revivify politics by grafting religion onto it, but that, I believe, would be to concede that "politics" really is too dreary to stand on its own. The alternative is to rediscover socialism itself as an evangelical, visionary cause, and the only one ultimately capable of reclaiming the lost language of human solidarity.

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DEBORAH MEIER

While laments about the decay of moral language are by no means new, the left's sense of inarticulateness has become a particular hallmark of our recent past. Once proud of its near monopoly on the language of higher aspiration (justice, fairness, equality, progress) and of its special flair for the word—in oratory and essay, in slogan and especially in lyric—the movement today can't so much as settle on a word to describe itself: left, progressive, populist, socialist, democratic?

The authors of *Habits of the Heart* come to the issue of inarticulateness eloquently, passionately and, above all, provocatively. One is stirred to reflection, annoyed, confused and in the end ready to argue. The process of untangling their theses—and I can only begin to do so—requires an active inner dialogue on the nature of civic purpose, republican virtue, the meaning of one's life, the nature of America. Bravo.

Yes, the sample is thin and bizarrely skewed toward what might be called yuppiedom; yes, the use to which the 200 interviews are put seems odd (less than a handful of people are quoted, and even they are never allowed to speak at any length); yes, the scope is overly ambitious, including as it does a history of Western civilization with particular attention to the last 350 years of American history. Still, the book has touched a nerve. In my own field—education—there are bits and pieces everywhere of the kinds of issues it raises. I hear it in my students, particularly the adolescents, who are bewildered by the very notion of rules of public decorum or concepts of school "honor" (although they are highly conscious of their personal honor). It is there in the banality of the standard curriculum, which consists of hundreds of disconnected and "measurable" bits adding up to nothing of substance. It is present in good teachers who are embarrassed to acknowledge pride in their calling and dedication to a job well done.

Yet I plowed through chapter after chapter of *Habits of the Heart* with mounting anxiety. The anxiety had at least two sources: first, I wondered whether I would have talked as foolishly as these interviewees. Second, I had the uneasy sense of being manipulated. I felt like a student whose professor is pulling forth "right" answers from the class. What, I wondered, could anyone possibly say to qualify for Bellah's mantle of authenticity? What language would someone have to use to "justify" his or her moral choices before Bellah would be satisfied? I was rooting for one of the research subjects to get it right. But was Bellah pushing his subjects too hard, so that each was bound to fall into a philosophical trap? Why, I wondered, did Bellah seem content when one couple used Scripture to justify their commitment to their marriage, but wouldn't let up on another who based theirs only on strong feelings? Was it because the former claimed Scripture as a "guarantee" whereas the latter acknowledged uncertainty? Is it certainty above all that Bellah et al. are seeking?

The embarrassing therapeutic language the authors complain of often seems to me the last resort of people reduced to banalities because their inquisitor wouldn't stop. Can it actually be that this therapeutic babble (what Bellah calls our first language) has undercut that rich and stylistically powerful second language—the biblical and republican rhetoric of the past? Can we really reshape the world according to the word, or did the old words die out because they didn't seem to fit our experience or the changed circumstances of our political economy?

Narcissism and meanspiritedness may be on the increase, and a tradition of civic helpfulness may have declined (I think so). But to turn this situation around will require substantive proposals for reform, not just better language. In fact, many Americans act against their self-interest because they have been sold the idea that our society will be saved only if they accept the workings of a blind and neutral market and give capital a freedom of choice that costs them a great deal. They were sold this bill of goods by fast-talking moralizers and good storytellers. Do we propose only to outtalk them, or do we actually have a superior story?

Self-interest takes a beating in this book. Perhaps we need to ask whether self-interest has to be a dirty word. Is it not possible that if our notion of the individual self were less impoverished, more embedded in society, we would see self-interest as connected to society's interest?

There is an aspect of social generosity that cannot easily be distinguished from self-interest. We "irrationally" care about others. Our self-absorption in our family and our children is an embodiment of our belief in a future beyond our own lives, as well as a means to our own selfish immortality. Similarly, our notions of honor rest on a sense of individual value but also on our future reputation in a community whose view of us matters. Why? It's not easy to say. Thus, our parenthood, like our defense of our honor, may be construed as a selfish private act or as an affirmation of civic virtue, depending on how one chooses to see it. Actually it is always some of both. (Oddly, Bellah discusses love and marriage, but parenthood scarcely at all.)

The discourse in this book takes a very high road, so high that the daily realities of our lives that cause us indignation, pain, bitterness and joy are rarely visible. Social movements that thrive only on permanent highs, on dreams of the far future, are prone to quick deaths. Keeping such moral highs alive often produces less attractive traits than the ones Bellah cherishes. Have we forgotten the fate of the major ideological highs of our own century? Fascism, Communism, patriotism, modern Islamic fundamentalism—unspeakable horrors have been committed in the name of each. Perhaps a little hesitation is in order before we too eagerly embrace the idea that we need transcendent common causes that eschew daily self-interest.

Bellah is hardly a sympathizer of any of these absolutisms—far from it. Yet such totalistic movements thrive in climates where self-interest becomes a dirty word, where alienated outsiders and rebels are subjects of suspicion, and urban cosmopolitanism is feared. These outsiders are also the villains of Bellah's version of history. While excessive or misplaced individualism is a danger, in my memory, its opposite, excessive corporatism, has been an even greater cause for alarm.

Bellah's history, in short, is selective and unbalanced. We need a powerful defense of individualism *and* of civic life. We suffer not simply from a thinness of language to talk about the value of civic life but from an equal thinness of language to describe and justify strong individualism. A society that can handle a highly developed individualism because it recognizes it as an essential component of a robust civic culture will assume that moments of self-doubt about the meaning of life are part of the good life, and that a sense of being "alone" among many may be

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the fate of all of us at times.

How shall we go about restoring such a healthy balance of individualism and its concomitant community? And one that this time includes men and women, whites and blacks, rich and poor? There's the rub. And how to do it amid multinational corporations? It gets even harder.

Certainly we need to listen to one another as Bellah has done. We need to hear our desires spoken aloud again, to find our voices. But we would do well not to ask too much of our words alone, nor to become overly concerned with the way we package our ideas rather than whether we have some good ones. And good ones require knowing the details of people's daily lives. And once you get down to the details it becomes clear that not everything is accessible at the moment to a solution.

Let's applaud, therefore, half-measures, small strides and little successes as long as they head us in the right direction—a direction that gives a few more people a chance to consider what it might mean to live "good life," and enjoy a little lively debate on "life styles" as well.

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*Deborah Meier is the director of Central Park East, a public elementary school in Manhattan's East Harlem.*

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## LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ

Americans have a way of minting and circulating graceless words at the very moment when their meanings cease to be common currency. "Relationship" and, usually jingling somewhere nearby, "commitment" are abstractions for what we do about the people and the pursuits we love. Time was when lovers shared a bed and all that ensued; today "share" is intransitive, i.e., functioning without an object. A similar fate has befallen the verb "to care," now often adjectival, as in a "caring person"—for what, no one cares enough to say. "Parenting" refers to the tasks women and men undertake upon producing children, once so self-evident as to require no gerund. For a people that enshrines personal freedom, what a plethora of techniques to be mastered and standards governing the formerly instinctive.

The decline of language natural for expressing moral judgments and values is one theme in the arguments posed by *Habits of the Heart*: that morality is no longer a living impulse in the behavior of Americans, or in the way they talk about their behavior, at any rate, and that the quest for private well-being has far outrun the quest for the common good. Drawing on the observations of the clairvoyant Alexis de Tocqueville (whose only miscalculation seems to have been in predicting schoolmasters and not actors at the helm of an "administrative despotism"), five social scientists astutely and earnestly dissect our collective soul on the basis of research and interviews. Their omissions are poignantly symptomatic of the limitations they so ably anatomize.

With four of the seven studies conducted in California, two on the East Coast and one in a "major Southern city," the survey of mores proceeds from a Western version of Saul Steinberg's famous *New Yorker* cover telescoping the vastness between oceans. And in keeping with the authors' assumption that "everyone in the United States thinks largely in middle-class categories," the respondents are largely middle-class. Also mostly in their 30s and 40s. Also white. If not for a few mentions of immigration, all of our ancestors might be presumed to have stepped off the *Mayflower* to be nurtured on Jeffersonian democracy and Poor Richard's adages. For the most part the culture studied here is what has come to be called yuppie. Poverty of spirit may be rampant, in America, but just plain poverty is too, and merits documentation in a study of national character.

Despite the racial uniformity of those interviewed, one of the book's most incisive points is that the American search for consensus keeps us from grappling with irreconcilable cultural diversity. But the authors' all-embracing tolerance of the fairly appalling study results is far from any grappling. Rather they present the opinions of the bigoted, the fatuous and the merely selfish in an indulgent, "forgive them for they know not what they do" manner that derives from their "nonjudgmental" discipline, yet undercuts their worthy plea for "social science as public philosophy." And while the diagnosis is excellent and painstaking, the prescription is as inoffensive and familiar as chicken soup: a "change in the meaning of work from private aggrandizement to public contribution"; greater accountability on the part of corporations; and more participation in church and civic groups, culminating in a social movement of transformation with the moral force of the civil rights movement. As the song says, who could ask for anything more? But military spending and the attendant drastic cuts in social programs, in this context, are mentioned perhaps twice.

"In the absence of any objectifiable criteria of right and wrong, good or evil, the self and its feelings become our only moral guide." *Habits of the Heart* is strongest where it focuses on the roles of therapist and bureaucratic manager as contemporary archetypes. From the boardroom to the bedroom, as the authors say, strategy, technique, self-seeking and the notion of strict contractual obligation have supplanted decency and intimacy, respectively. Unfortunately the authors themselves succumb frequently to the language of strategy. On the subject of marriage, for example, they show little more awareness than their respondents that the institution rests on the twin pillars of sexual attraction and economics; finding the perfect mate sounds more like finding a tennis partner.

The same therapeutically oriented pop existentialism afflicts current fiction—art imitating life—especially and alarmingly the work of aspiring young writers. "Coping," "working through" problems and seeking resolution, emotional and esthetic, at whatever cost have replaced the dilemma of the human condition: the fact of mortality and the conflict between primal passions and social institutions. Aristotelian pity and terror hold no sway; rather, healing is sought before the illness is thoroughly comprehended.

Raymond Carver, the writer most admired by neophytes, distills a bleak vacuity in his stories, along with the palpable and heart-rending sense of something—structure, meaning, purpose—missing. His emulators, legion in university writing programs, get the vacuity all right but not the echoing recognition of loss. Why doesn't anyone imitate Cynthia Ozick or Toni Morrison? Too hard, a daunting abundance. Few young writers see richness around them, and if they did, unlettered as many are, they might not command the verbal complexity needed to render it.

Feelings generate language, but as *Habits of the Heart* acknowledges, language equally generates feelings and thoughts. What further evidence of the decline of the West is needed than this

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quote from a therapist on his professional mission?

> Ultimately I think people want to know that they're O.K., and they're looking for somebody to tell them that, but I think what's really needed is to be able to have themselves say that I, Richard, am O.K. personally. What people really need is a self-validation, and once people can admit that they're O.K., even though I have shortcomings, everybody has shortcomings, but once they can admit that, all right I've got these, but I'm really O.K., somehow, they get miraculously cured.

Not surprisingly, fiction shows the same impoverishment—one thinks of the Jean Rhys character who implores her ghostwriter, "Don't you know any long words, and if you do, would you please use them?"—along with the straining to make every grievous or unjust situation appear "O.K." Genuine literature, from Genesis onward, tragic or comic, illustrates amply and with reverence the ways in which things are not "O.K." and never will be. Its triumph is the passion for beauty and truth in language, form and conception, "gaiety transfiguring all that dread."

Far from gaiety, what we are offered nowadays is "immediacy," the illusion that the action is happening as we read; and we are offered it through the preponderant use of the present tense. "Kevin finds his ex-wife kneeling in the garden, snipping marigolds. Her broad-brimmed hat moves . . . " It is as if no one can be expected to bother with events in the past. Those would be objective facts perilously, or tediously, summoning sensibility and evaluation, the writer's as well as the reader's. The present tense pretends that a movie or television show is taking place which, alas, we cannot see; luckily someone closer to the screen will give us a moment-by-moment account. But fiction need not aspire to be film; its magic is different from that of images on a screen. It is the magic of habits of the heart made audible in words. The book in question suggests, whether or not the authors intended it, that we have precious few habits in common, or hearts in common.

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*Lynne Sharon Schwartz is the author of three novels, a collection of stories,* Acquainted With the Night, *and a recent nonfiction book,* We Are Talking About Homes: A Great University Against Its Neighbors *(Harper & Row).*

## MICHAEL ZUCKERMAN

*Habits of the Heart* is about as close to the inferno as establishment social scientists are likely to let themselves get. Its tracing of the deepening circles of desolation inscribed by our individualism comes closer to the core of our national pathology than any other academic analysis has.

But Bellah and his collaborators are unwilling, in the end, to touch the depths of their discoveries. They do not pronounce our incorrigible self-centeredness depraved. They do not see our mounting self-indulgence as sinful. And without ever confronting the spiritual flaccidity all about them in their data, they affirm a pathetic faith that we can reclaim a degree of redemptive moral commitment which would be, for them and for us, paradise enough.

This faith is founded on a willful refusal to reckon fully with the force of their own interpretations of their interviews and, especially, on a well-intentioned but ultimately inept reading of the historical record. They cling poignantly to the vague and impotent yearnings of their survey subjects for meaningful morality and consequential community, mistaking the most vapid nostalgia for practical possibilities and earnest aspirations. And they uphold images of the American tradition that are essentially inert and irretrievable.

Where the poet himself called on Virgil and Beatrice for guidance, these discount Dantes rely on de Tocqueville. They could have done better. They would have had a far more powerful handle on their own data had they looked to the Frenchman's American contemporaries, such as Thomas Cole.

At almost precisely the time that de Tocqueville published *Democracy in America*, Cole was painting the cycle of five massive canvases he called *The Course of Empire*. Depicting an inexorable passage from rude barbarism to pastoral equipoise to civilized decadence to the sacking of the city to resumption of the reign of nature, Cole expressed widespread fears for the future of a nation that was rushing headlong from its virtuous origins to a fatal violation of nature.

Cole, James Fenimore Cooper and a host of Americans of de Tocqueville's time took history seriously. They hoped to hold the golden moment in the middle landscape, where virtue could still be reconciled with progress and nature with civilization, but they understood that the tension was precarious. They recognized that republics do not remain and that the day of their doom could only be deferred.

De Tocqueville caught the country in exactly the transition that the romantics dreaded. He froze the fading balance between self-seeking and the claims of the community in his brilliant elaboration of "self-interest rightly understood." But Bellah and his associates mistake de Tocqueville's time-tied insight for timeless truth. Even as they rebuke us for our refusal to concede the claims of the past, they exhibit that very ahistoricism.

They admit that we have lost our balance, that we have scuttled the cultural traditions that used to offset our individualism, that community has atrophied among us and the self grown cancerous. They acknowledge that we have come to live in "glorious, but terrifying, isolation."

But even as they trace our disastrous descent into independence, they bid us take heart. They insist that we have resources in our heritage to recover our connectedness to our fellow citizens. They remind us of the tension de Tocqueville elucidated and of even older traditions they call biblical and republican, which attached men and women to one another, and to generations past and future, and to substantive ethics and obligations.

Nonetheless, such gestures and genuflections toward history are not enough. The discussion of the biblical and republican strands in the American story is so simplistic as to become itself a symptom of the presentism the book's larger logic laments. The recognition of the rupture of the old moral order wrought by the rise of the national market and the giant corporation is so perfunctory as to vitiate their obvious import for the sundering of those earlier strands.

Bellah and his research team seek the revitalization of communities and say that communities are "constituted by their past," but the authors are never really serious about the past. They do not get the stories right, and they seem incapable of conceiving that history might actually matter or that its dynamic might actually confine and contort the present. They treat our traditions as if they were simply a smorgasbord to be sampled more competently. The

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Americans who trembled at the course of empire knew better. Cole, Cooper and their countrymen knew that time had a trajectory, that precious things could perish, that culture was more than a perennial present.

*Habits of the Heart* understands vital culture to be "always an argument about the meaning of the destiny its members share." But the vast preponderance of the book's evidence indicates that we do not argue with one another and do not even share a discourse, let alone a destiny. As one Californian puts it, our ideal home is twenty acres and "a moat around it with alligators," our ideal community "an island" inaccessible "from outside."

If, as Bellah professes to believe, "American culture remains alive so long as the conversation continues and the argument is intense," then the conversations that he and his colleagues recorded argue that American culture is already dead.

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*Michael Zuckerman is author of* Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century *(Knopf).*

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## JAMES WALKUP

I have a niece who often expresses a feeling familiar to us all. When she makes contact with something she likes, she sings out a single word, "More." Her candor seems unequivocal, but a translation requires two parts. She means both "That hits the spot, keep it coming," and "Not enough yet; I'll tell you when to stop." When I read *Habits of the Heart*, I thought to myself, "More."

This book satisfies because it demonstrates that an honest moderation can claim radical credentials. Such a claim would be doomed, of course, if the moderation proposed were an empty compromise between extremes rather than the use of reason on a human scale to respond to new social and moral dilemmas. Bellah and his co-authors mostly adhere to this second, more strenuous approach, though they occasionally lapse into the first.

Fortunately, a built-in corrective protects the book from oversimplification: the texture of the world breaks through in the compelling, abrasive reality of the moral issues faced (and evaded) by the citizens we meet. The tendency toward soporific moralizing is kept in check by the raw, irritating pathos of scenes in which we see others conjuring with our favorite moral totems in ways that make us cringe. For example, Sheila, a young nurse, pays sorry yet partly faithful tribute to a heritage of self-reliance that rightly moves us in other settings. Offered the sobriety of Freud's cockiness, the audacity of Emerson's vision, the toughness of Anne Hutchinson's battle with the Massachusetts Bay Colony, she can only found a sad religion of her own, "Sheilaism," which enjoins the believer to "love yourself and be gentle with yourself."

When it comes time to diagnose our problem, the authors show good sense and generosity: we are now unable to bridge the gap between our "first language" of individualism and a more serviceable moral language. They also lend a hand by providing the linguistic construction materials for a moral infrastructure. Their discerning, well-crafted glossary of key concepts is meant to assist in the accurate description moral reasoning requires.

Good as this book is, it is simply not enough. Its message is as straight and sturdy as a Shaker chair, yet I suspect that it is strong precisely because the authors limit themselves to points that need making and can be made in an inspiring way. Moderation runs riot. The authors' excess of restraint inclines them to frame tough questions as problems of language, concentrating, for example, on our lack of a vocabulary with which to talk about the space between "Me" and "Others." A single session with a patient in psychotherapy is enough to remind me that the rattle of the shuttle back and forth between the two can be deafening. But despite the noise, surely the main point is that we lack the practices and moral sentiments that would make such a language intelligible. The problem is not one of words but of deeds, desires and values.

What more could we have expected if the authors had not deliberately (and, in my view, quite arbitrarily) confined themselves to culture? They argue that the culture of therapy fosters a calculating, expressive individualism that cannot support a morally coherent community. But to focus on therapy as a "cultural phenomenon" begs the question of whether this defect should be attributed to the essentials of its practice or merely to the abuses that accompany popularization. I have spent most of the last decade being trained in psychology and would defend its essentials. Yet I have no trouble rolling my eyes upward along with every other reader at the claptrap uttered by the human potentialist who says that a healthy person is a plant and that "with enough sunshine and water, we'll grow beautifully."

The analytical passages of *Habits of the Heart* urge us to overcome the misleading contemporary opposition between an ersatz communitarianism and an empty individualism so intent on breaking free of all connections that it finds itself free to choose yet without anything worth choosing. But in their eagerness to deliver the good news that this phony dichotomy is a product of culture, not nature, the authors too easily accept a simplified notion of individualism, overlooking the more complex view hidden in their own data. When the therapists Ellen and Margaret exhibit the credible moral self-knowledge Bellah et al. claim to prize, the authors complain that Ellen's approach is "not altogether different from a textbook description of decision-making in a school of management" and that Margaret has "no objectifiable criterion" for choosing values. But the lack of an objectifiable criterion does not automatically reduce a choice to "idiosyncratic preference"—a phrase that brings to mind the brute, self-justifying impulse that guides my hand to Corn Flakes rather than Post Toasties. By defining individualism as a historical and moral dead end, the authors have inadvertently made it harder to mediate effectively between the claims of the community and individual desire.

Consider an alternative. Mill's moral psychology esteems "experiments in living" as a way each of us can discover what he or she finds valuable. Far from being mere expressions of preference, these efforts to secure ideals that excite our affections, to make values our own by attending to the significance they impart to our lives, are the surest means of dissolving the arbitrariness of choice. It is here—in the high value accorded to the opportunity for each to determine value for himself or herself—that individualism makes its strongest claim vis-à-vis the community. Ironically, this traditional liberal value is ruled out by *Habits of the Heart*'s analytical scheme. The dilemma raised by this individualism is that the dual loyalty it advocates—to one's own desires, however sublimated, and to civilization—insists on what the authors wish above all else

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to avoid, the existence of irreducible, "zero-sum" trade-offs between citizen and society. History teaches chilling lessons about what happens when we downplay the importance of conflict and dissent.

It might be objected that, like most liberal values, this alternative sounds nice but is uncommonly difficult to bring off in an age that manufactures desire in the service of commerce. I agree. But so long as this difficulty is treated as a cultural one, not one rooted in political economy, we are unlikely to make sense of the impediments to the kind of individualism that is the hallmark of any progressive society.

*James Walkup is in graduate training as a clinical psychologist at the New School for Social Research.*

## NORMAN BIRNBAUM

Jonathan Edwards saw his countrymen as sinners in the hands of an angry God, condemned to unspeakable torment by their dependence on his arbitrary will. Contemporary Americans eschew theology. For them, sin and virtue have been replaced by losing and winning. God's anger is gone and in its place they confront the implacable workings of social selection. Angry sermons, too, are heard no more: the homeopathic litanies of anchormen are favored instead.

Robert Bellah and his colleagues have provided us with a superb set of reflections on the strange course of the American spirit—an analysis of the unintended secular consequences of the singular American fusion of capitalism and Protestantism. The Reaganite ascendancy has confirmed the worst tendencies of the American university. Some academics serve power in ways enthusiastic and supine at the same time. Others, bewildered and frightened of moral complexity, proclaim themselves neutral. Here, however, is a book from the academy which addresses the educated public, seeks to recapture lost or neglected aspects of the national tradition and invites us to rethink the groundwork of our society. Its major contributions are several, and I list but four.

De Tocqueville has long counted as a modern master, but he has often been used in an unserious way. Those who dislike American populism and radicalism have construed him as an unsparing enemy of the tyrannical propensities of American democracy. Others have regarded his analysis of the ineluctable development of American individualism as the last word—or one final enough, in any event, to render further thought unnecessary. The phrase "habits of the heart" is de Tocqueville's and it is used here to describe an America that has changed much since his time. Bellah's de Tocqueville is not a *deus ex machina* summoned to silence history's dramatic tumult. Those who are overly reverential toward him are often uneasy with the implications of modern social thought, reluctant to assume the burdens of our century. Bellah and company draw upon one of the master liberals of the nineteenth century to analyze the implausibility of twentieth-century liberalism.

The reappropriation of de Tocqueville is part of the text's larger design. *Habits of the Heart* is a venture in interpretive social science. The authors renounce the (supposed) value neutrality of static models of society which often legitimate existing conditions. Social science, they insist, is not like natural science: it is a form of political discourse, of historical self-reflection. The interviews in *Habits of the Heart* constitute an elaborate physiology of American spiritual distress.

The book connects sociological inquiry with one of the most significant aspects of current historical discussion, the argument about a republican tradition in the United States. After Louis Hartz's systematic reification of American individualism, after Hofstadter's pervasive skepticism about reform, a new generation of historians has dared to assert that the market is not the primordial American institution. The Republic's founders actually believed in a polity, in a society of citizens. For them, Bellah notes, the notion of a "private citizen" was a contradiction in terms.

The work's analysis of the lives and works of middle-class Americans shows how right some of the newer historians may be. Much has been lost. Our fellow citizens float in socio-historical space. Even the most ostensibly critical among them seeks an individualized road to happiness. No wonder that a functioning democracy now strikes us as a utopia, unimaginably difficult of attainment. The present work gives an American idiom to the systematic critique of capitalist democracy undertaken elsewhere, notably by the European socialist parties, by the Christian avant-garde (and sometimes by the main body, too) and by European conservatives attached to ideas of community.

Bellah et al. are, I think, insufficiently attentive to the communitarian elements of the New Deal, to the New Deal, indeed, as a social movement. Not the least of the book's merits is that it continually invites rejoinder. For the moment, let us say that we can still be proud of our universities. Beset by militant and repressive philistines, dominated by aerospace and biotech subcontractors and nuclear war planners, our institutions have nevertheless given us this humane and radical book. We may await with interest the response of the self-proclaimed votaries of tradition, William Bennett et al. Bellah and his colleagues have taken them at their word and inquired into the conditions under which tradition can be renewed. We may wait for some time: a return to our national roots is the last thing the American pseudoconservatives want. □

*Norman Birnbaum is finishing a book on contemporary social knowledge, to be published next fall by Pantheon.*

# FILMS.

## ANDREW KOPKIND

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Someone should make that movie, but if you think director Peter Yates, scenarist Steve Tesich and reporter Nicholas Gage did it in *Eleni*, you're dead wrong. It's a shame, too, because this is the only opportunity we are likely to have for a presentation of those epic events—even an incomplete, biased or wrongheaded one—on the screen in this century. In the book from which the movie was skimmed, Gage told the story of his mother's struggle for survival in the war-torn mountain village of Lia against a backdrop of social and political history. He skewed the story against the left, which was understandable because his family, more or less accidentally, was put in the opposite camp and suffered drastically. Mother Eleni was executed by a guerrilla firing squad; the children were scattered; Gage (né Gatzoyiannis) found his way to Massachusetts at the age of 9, where he joined his father, who had left the old country before the war.

The book was filled with garish anti-communist propaganda, but a diligent reader could detect in it a sense that the modern Greek tragedy was more than a comic-book caper of villainous communists and victimized peasants. The Greek revolution had its roots in the suffering of a people under more foreign and domestic tyrannies than Hollywood can count. Fascism had a firm foothold in the peninsula long before the Italian and German hordes invaded, and the monarchy—imposed by Britain in the person of Nordic puppets—hardly encouraged egalitarian aspirations. The civil war, fought in stages by the Greek Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) against the Nazis and then against monarchist-nationalists supported by British and U.S. troops, was also the first hot battle of the cold war, with the Truman Administration waging counter-revolution against Third World guerrillas as stand-ins for Russian Reds.

Not much of that was laid out in Gage's account, but enough was included to give the book a semblance of historical reality, and also to make credible the author's obsessive quest for revenge against the village commissar who killed his mother. Without history, Gage's mission looks like a case study in Oedipal pathology—the Freudian, not the Sophoclean, kind.

In fact, momism—not communism—is the problem in Lia in the movie version. Kate Nelligan's Eleni Gatzoyiannis scampers over the rocky slopes and strikes poses against the bleak landscape like Medea playing Mother Courage. Her visage caked with Coppertone and her head swathed in heroic braids, Nelligan sacrifices and suffers for her children with a nobility so exaggerated it provokes titters of embarrassment in the audience. The kids seemed smothered by her heroism, and when they finally escape in a daring nighttime run to freedom, it is hard to tell whether their liberation is really from ELAS or from Eleni.

Of course, the movie can be seen as another number in the current series of anti-communist offerings that run from the second half of *The Killing Fields* through *Rambo* and *Rocky IV*. But its cold war texture is fashioned more from emotional values than political ones. Fanatical motherhood, family sacrifice and personal revenge comprise the ideology hawked here, which makes it possible to characterize the opposing beliefs in equally nonpolitical terms. The guerrillas' "cause" has nothing to do with independence, equality and justice but becomes a crusade to kill mothers, deport children and terrorize opponents. Those things may have happened, but they're not what millions of Greeks fought for. It just doesn't make sense.

Gage recounts the events of one day in early 1944 when the ELAS guerrillas and British soldiers were jockeying for control of the region around Lia after the Nazis withdrew. The guerrillas announced a rally to demand supplies and money from the British:

> ELAS supporters flooded in from all over the Mourgana villages and beyond. The central square was not large enough to contain the thousands of demonstrators, who arrived shouting, "Give us food! Give us arms! Give us medicine! We are fighting for you and you have forgotten us!" It was the largest gathering in the history of the village, and the Liotes marveled at the number and strength of the supporters.

Things got a lot worse over the next four years, as the guerrillas were repeatedly assaulted, their foreign support never materialized and the U.S. intervention deepened. But to deny the essential authenticity of the revolution is to rewrite history in the most fatuous and venal way. *Eleni* simply accepts the notion of the empire of evil, and gives it a small-town twist. It's hardly worth the stock it's printed on.

Steve Tesich, who has written one howler after another (did you catch

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*Four Friends*?) after his wildly overpraised debut script for *Breaking Away*, seems to have lost all sensitivity to nuance and ear for dialogue that he once cultivated. His clumsy efforts are complemented by Yates's direction, which is stilted and awkward, a monstrous amalgam of Greek opera and TV movie of the week. The cutting between the travails of Eleni and her son's search for her executioner thirty-five years later robs the film of any dramatic integrity it might have had, much as that other *New York Times* reporter's quest trivialized *The Killing Fields*. Hollywood's habit of focusing on journalists to dramatize the events they cover has for the most part ruined more movies than it has improved. Just think how much more interesting *All The President's Men* would have been as Nixon's story, instead of Woodstein's.

John Malkovich plays Nicholas Gage as an unsmiling, tight-assed vigilante, more Bernhard Goetz than King Oedipus, which only accentuates the pathological point of the plot. Diminutive Linda Hunt turns up as a villager with a stirring monologue, delivered with such high theatrics that one expects her to take a bow to the audience when she's done. The best performance is Oliver Cotton's portrayal of the sleazy commissar executioner. He alone is able to give a little humanity to the caricature as written. All in all, I liked the civil war better. □


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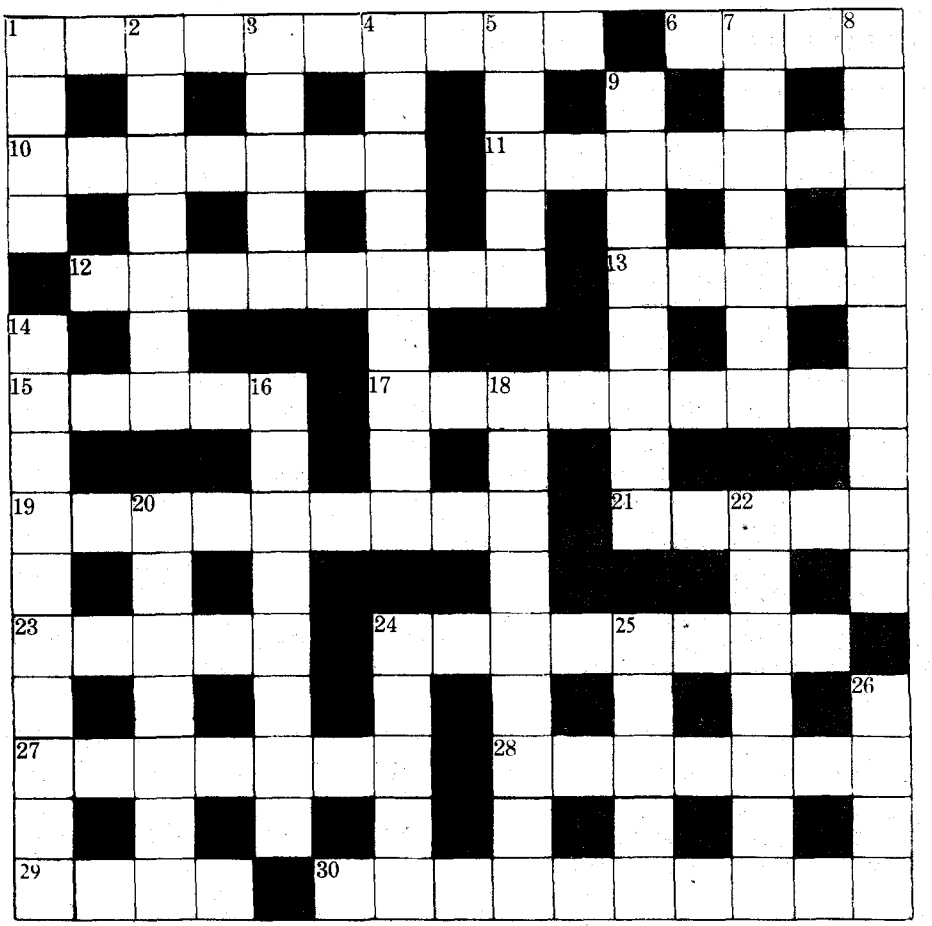
# Crossword Puzzle No. 2084

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Ida and Pat, with Gilbert and Herbert, or Diana and Grace. (10)
6 In part, its teeth might be even when used. (4)
10 One sort of seed has a pit inside, notwithstanding. (7)
11 Does one practice, and upon completion remark "well done"? (7)
12 Not the badge of a London policeman, though a woman might be in need of one. (5,3)
13 They might have done a hula here, rather than a sort of tango. (5)
15 Sadie's a little shook up by such thoughts. (5)
17 One of those times when someone close starts to count. (5-4)
19 A combination of passages by Daedalus might prove confusing. (9)
21 What we'll be tomorrow, when the bowl flows in the air. (5)
23 Sweet product found in sumac and yucca. (5)
24 This bird might have something in hand, with a bent nail. (8)
27 In a way the near (but not too near) Near-Eastern spot. (7)
28 Take aim, stop, shake well, and lay it on thick. (7)
29 Acts like shy animals. (4)
30 How a churchman might be dressed might pay off! (10)

DOWN

1 See 26
2 Where you might find groceries kept for the future. (2,5)
3 You'll find a number on a branch, so get up! (5)
4 Any of the genus Ovis might be relative this way, and such might be gained by degrees. (9)
5 Get me up to study, and bring out the port! (5)
7 Was he a matman in play? No, a Lord, perhaps, now near Disney World. (7)
8 Do away with certain dives, and you'll find those who work hard to strike a deal. (10)
9 Wilde said experience is the name everyone gives to his. (8)
14 With a bad set, I'd a cold completely out of joint. (10)
16 What the frightened might say in a boat could prove useful in the garden. (8)
18 A sort of White Rose, under different circumstances. (9)
20 Seems just a has-been, but might make a lot of noise in Scotland or Ireland. (7)
22 A lot of nerve, that is, one might find in the old club! (7)
24 Somewhat like a round churchman. (5)
25 Missing this, one might get little out of the computer. (5)
26 and 1 down If you have robbers, you might protect the corn with these. (8)

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